

SELECT THOUGHTS

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Fred W Robertson

THOUGHTS ON GOD AND MAN

SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF
FREDERICK WILLIAM ROBERTSON

“OF BRIGHTON”

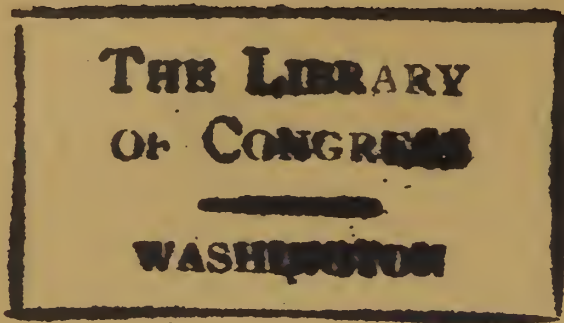
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395764

NEW YORK: HUNT & EATON
CINCINNATI: CRANSTON & CURTS

1893



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NEW YORK.

Electrotyped, printed, and bound by
HUNT & EATON,
150 Fifth Avenue, New York.

PREFATORY NOTE.

FREDERICK WILLIAM ROBERTSON was born in London February 3, 1816, and died in Brighton in August, 1853, at the age of thirty-seven. As a boy he was singularly pure, high-spirited, and courageous, and though his father, an artillery officer, destined him for the Church he clung to his early resolve to be a soldier, until in his twentieth year he yielded to the paternal wish and entered Oxford University. He was ordained a minister of the Anglican Church in 1840, and labored at Winchester, Cheltenham, and briefly at Oxford, before August, 1847, when he began to preach in Trinity Chapel, Brighton, a pulpit which he made famous for his earnestness, his eloquence, and his lucid explanations of the sweet reasonableness of spiritual truth.

Since his death the sermons of "Robertson of Brighton" have been widely read in America and England. The present editor has undertaken to select suggestive passages from these published volumes and to group them upon a simple and natural plan, prefixing to each an appropriate portion of Scripture.

JANUARY.

DAILY THOUGHTS.

	JAN.
Resolves.....	1
God is a Spirit.....	2
God's Greatness.....	3
God is Unchangeable.....	4
God is Holy.....	5
God is Love.....	6
God is Just.....	7
God's Humanity.....	8
Creation.....	9
History of Creation.....	10
God, in His Works.....	11
God is Everywhere..	12
The Robes of the Invisible.....	13
The Sea... ..	14
The Night.....	15
Christ, Our Mediator.....	16
Christ, the Son of Man	17
Christ, the Son of God.....	18
Christ's Daily Life.....	19
Christ's Knowledge.....	20
Christ's Teaching.....	21
The Sermon on the Mount.....	22
Christ's Miracles.....	23
Christ's Will.....	24
Christ's Sinlessness.....	25
Christ was Tempted.....	26
Christ's Love.....	27
Christ's Atonement.....	28
The Cross of Christ.....	29
The Blood of Christ.....	30
Christ's Resurrected Body.....	31

THOUGHTS ON GOD AND MAN.

1.

RESOLVES.

THIS one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—Phil. iii, 13, 14.

TO try to make conversation more useful, and therefore to store my mind with facts, yet to be on my guard against a wish to shine.

To feel it a degradation to speak of my own doings.

To speak less of self, and think less.

To try and overcome castle-building.

To try to fix attention on Christ, rather than on the doctrines of Christ.

To try to fix my thoughts in prayer without distraction.

To listen to conscience, instead of, as Pilate did, to intellect.

2.

GOD IS A SPIRIT.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.—John iv, 24.

WHAT is meant by spirit? . . . Consider the universe, with the stars and sun, the harmony of the planets. All this force, order, harmony—that is God. This spring season, with bursting vegetation—its life is God. Our own minds, their thought and feeling—that is spirit. God, therefore, is the Mind of the universe. Force, law, harmony—all this is God. And yet remark the coldness of this, for he is thus revealed only as a God for the intellect, not for the heart. Therefore, for the heart he is revealed as a Father.

God will never be visible, nor will his blessedness. He has no form. The pure in heart will see him, but never with the eye; only in the same way, but in a different degree, that they see him now. In the anticipated vision of the Eternal, what do you expect to see? A shape? Hues? You will never behold God!

3.

GOD'S GREATNESS.

BEHOLD, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom.—Job xxxvi, 5.

THE first measurement, so to speak, which is given us of God's greatness is in respect of Time. He inhabiteth eternity. . . . Now the only way we have of forming any idea of eternity is by going step by step up to the largest measures of time we know of, and so ascending on and on till we are lost in wonder. . . . There is a second measure given us of God. It is in respect of Space. He dwelleth in the high and lofty place. He dwelleth moreover in the most insignificant place—even the heart of man. . . . It is difficult to say which conception carries with it the greatest exaltation—that of boundless space or that of unbounded time. The third measure which is given us of God respects his character. His name is Holy. The chief idea which this would convey to us is separation from evil. . . . None but the pure can understand purity. The chief knowledge which we have of God's holiness comes from

our acquaintance with unholiness. We know what impurity is—God is not that. We know what restlessness and guilt and passion are, and deceitfulness and pride and waywardness—all these we know. God is none of these. And this is our chief acquaintance with his character. We know what God is not. . . . Holiness is only a shadow to our minds until it receives shape and substance in the life of Christ.

4.

GOD IS UNCHANGEABLE.

JESUS CHRIST the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.—Heb. xiii, 8.

OFT have I felt, when fevered by earthly excitement and ruffled by earthly difficulties, as I looked up to the expanse of heaven above in the pure, still moonshine, that it was an emblem of God's unchanging calmness rebuking the tumult within and saying to the storm, "Peace, be still." The more serene a man be the more incapable of being ruffled and agitated by outward circumstances, looking on the universe as God does, the more nearly does he resemble God.

5.

GOD IS HOLY.

AND they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.—Rev. iv, 8.

LOVE, mercy, tenderness, purity—these are no mere names when we see them brought out in the human actions of our Master. . . . All this character of holiness is intelligible to us in Christ.

There is a third light in which God's holiness is shown to us, and that is in the sternness with which he recoils from guilt.

6.

GOD IS LOVE.

GOD is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.—1 John iv, 16.

IN the spiritual world a man is measured not by his genius, but by his likeness to God. God does not reason nor remember, but he loves.

7.

GOD IS JUST.

OUR God is a consuming fire.—Heb. xii, 29.

THERE is no discord between the powers and attributes of the mind of God ; there is no discord between his justice and his

love. God's justice and love are one. Infinite justice must be infinite love. Justice is but another sign of love.

Love is justice applied to different objects, just as the electric spark is different to different senses; to the ear a sound, to the tongue a sulphurous taste, to the eye a blinding flash. Could love save Sodom? Would it have been love to let such a city go on seeding earth with iniquity?

8.

GOD'S HUMANITY.

IT behooved him to be made like unto his brethren that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God.—Heb. ii, 17.

GOD cannot give advice; he can only issue a command. God cannot say, "It is better to do this;" his perfections demand something absolute: "Thou shalt *do* this; thou shalt *not* do this."

9.

CREATION.

O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.—Psalm civ, 24.

THE first chapter of Genesis starts with the doctrine that the heavens and the earth, that light and darkness, were all created by

one and the same God. Modern science day by day reveals more clearly the unity of design that pervades creation. Again, in Moses's account nothing is more remarkable than the principle of gradation on which he tells us the universe arose. To this the accumulated strata bear their witness, to this the organic remains testify continually. Not that first which is highest, but that which is lowest. First the formless earth, then the green herb growing on the sides of the up-raised mountains, then the lowest forms of animal existence, then the highest types, then man, the last and noblest. And then, perhaps, an age to come, when all shall be swept away to make room for a higher and nobler race of beings. For "that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural."

10.

HISTORY OF CREATION.

IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.—Gen. i, 1.

OF the Book of Genesis the earlier part consists of extracts from two distinct documents, distinguished by the use of "God" (Elohim) and "Lord" (Jehovah). Whence

were the materials for this history procured? The answer is interesting. . . . It is almost certain that it was not from Egypt, but Chaldea, from whence Abraham came. We might have almost expected this from the story of the confusion of tongues, the scene of which is Babylon. It appears, therefore, that at the time when the Israelites left Egypt, and long after, the very accounts which were given to them by Moses were the accounts taught and received by another portion of the human race, from whom they had been brought by Abraham and preserved for centuries. It seems that Moses committed to writing those parts which were chiefly calculated to be prefatory to his law, and to corroborate by an appeal to antiquity the great doctrine he was commissioned to teach—the unity of God and his moral government of the world, nations, and individuals. . . . This explanation of two documents will account for what must have often struck you—the repetitions which you find in many accounts, the going back every now and then to a point which had been passed, and tracing the same ground over again in different words until the thread is taken up where it was broken off.

11.

GOD, IN HIS WORKS.

THE glory of the Lord shall endure forever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works.—Psalm civ, 31.

“HE was in the world,” an indwelling of Deity in matter, which is unconscious of his presence. Creation was by indwelling. I ask you to remark how this stands contrasted with the unscriptural conception of creation which men often have. What do people mean generally by creation? They mean that God made the world as a watchmaker makes a watch. The watchmaker makes the watch, winds it up, goes away from it, and leaves it go by itself. . . . God is “in the world,” the Life of all that is, the Vital Force; not giving laws, but himself the Law. . . . The beauty of the seashell and of the field flower is the loveliness of God; the Force which moves the waters everlastingly is the mighty movement of the one living Being; the instinct which brings the wild birds in long lines through heaven at the appointed season is the order of the mind of God in them.

12.

GOD IS EVERYWHERE.

IF I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.—Psalm cxxxix, 8, 9, 10.

NOT only is God everywhere, but all of God is in every point. Not his wisdom here, and his goodness there; the whole truth may be read, if we had eyes, and heart, and time enough, in the laws of a daisy's growth. God's beauty, his love, his unity; nay, if we observe how each atom exists not for itself alone, but for the sake of every other atom in the universe, in that daisy or atom you may read the law of the Cross itself. The crawling of a spider before now has taught perseverance and led to a crown. The little moss, brought close to a traveler's eye in an African desert, who had laid down to die, roused him to faith in that love which had so curiously arranged the minute fibers of a thing so small, to be seen once and but once by a human eye, and carried him in the strength of that heavenly repast, like Elijah of old, a journey of forty days and forty nights to the source of the Nile.

13.

THE ROBES OF THE INVISIBLE.

THE heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.—Psalm xix, 1.

THE sounds and sights of this lovely world are but the drapery of the robe in which the Invisible has clothed himself. Does a man ask what this world is, and why man is placed in it? It was that the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world might be seen. Have we ever stood beneath the solemn vault of heaven when the stars were looking down in silent splendor, and not felt an overpowering sense of his eternity? When the white lightning has quivered in the sky, has that told us nothing of power, or only something of electricity? Rocks and mountains—are they here to give us the idea of material massiveness, or to reveal the conception of the Strength of Israel?

14.

THE SEA.

AND he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.—Mark iv, 39.

THE sea rests not, because of the attraction of the heavenly bodies, which keep it in an endless ebb and flow—drawn toward the

earth and drawn toward the sky alternately, and obeying neither impulse solely, it cannot rest. Know we nothing of this in our own bosoms? There is a tide of feeling which ebbs alternately to heaven and earth. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." We are conscious, surely, of high instincts that tell of God; conscious, besides, of groveling propensities that drag us down to earth—low wants and lofty longings. . . . The love of God must master the world's attraction, or if not, then the soul is "like the troubled sea when it cannot rest."

15.

NIGHT.

THERE shall be no night there.—Rev. xxii, 5.

IN the dust and pettiness of life we seem to cease to behold Him; then at night He undraws the curtain again and we see how much of God and eternity the bright distinct day has hidden from us. Yes, in solitary, silent, vague darkness, the Awful One is near. I have been sitting out to look at this lovely night, with a pale, pearly sky—*into*, not *at*, which you look, till you have pierced into the forever.

16.

CHRIST, OUR MEDIATOR.

FOR there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.—1 Tim. ii, 5.

“IF God is love, why do we need a Mediator?” I think the best answer is, I do not know. Nor do I know why, God being love, the intervention of maternal suffering is the indispensable condition of existence, or why suffering is the necessary medium for the procuring of anything that really deserves the name of blessing. Why are knowledge, civilization, health, purchased only by severe labor for us by others—that is through mediation? I only know that it is so—an unalterable law, the beauty of which I can dimly see. . . . And seeing that as the law of the universe, I am prepared to believe and acquiesce in it, when found in the atonement, as part of the divine government.

17.

CHRIST, THE SON OF MAN.

BEHOLD my hands and my feet, that it is I myself : handle me, and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.—Luke xxiv, 39.

THE incarnation declared that the Son of man is the Son of God. One appeared who was not the Jew, nor the Greek, nor the

Roman, but the Man ; One in whose veins ran the blood of the human race ; One in whose character was neither exclusively the woman nor the man, but all that was most manly, and all that was most womanly.

18.

CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.

THESE [signs] are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye *might have life through his name.*—John xx, 31.

CHRIST was the Son of God. But remember in what sense he ever used this name—Son of God because Son of man. He claims sonship in virtue of his humanity. . . . Only through man can God be known ; only through a perfect man perfectly revealed. Christ, then, must be loved as Son of man before he can be adored as Son of God. In personal love and adoration of Christ the Christian religion consists, not in correct morality or in correct doctrines, but in a homage to the King. . . . Live with him till he becomes a living thought—ever present—and you will find a reverence growing up which compares with nothing else in human feeling.

19.

CHRIST'S DAILY LIFE.

A MAN of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.—Isa. liii, 3.

HE has entered little into the depths of our Master's character who does not know that the settled tone of his disposition was a peculiar and subdued sadness. Take the two brightest moments of his career. When glory encircled him on the mountain, where his form was clothed in the radiance of a supernal cloud, what was his conversation with Moses and Elias? They spake to him of his decease. When a multitude escorted him triumphantly into Jerusalem, in the very midst of all that merriment his tears were flowing for Jerusalem. Not the splendor of a transfiguration and not the excitement of a procession could dazzle the view which the Son of man had formed of life.

20.

CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE.

AND Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.—Luke ii, 52.

THE Son of God increased in wisdom as well as stature. He knew more at thirty than at twenty. There were things he knew at twenty which he had not known before. In the last

year of his life he went to a fig tree expecting to find fruit and was disappointed. In all matters of eternal truth, principles which are not measured by more or less truth, his knowledge was absolute; but it would seem that in matters of earthly fact, which are modified by time and space, his knowledge was, like ours, more or less dependent upon experience.

Now we forget this; we are shocked at the thought of the partial ignorance of Christ as if it were irreverence to think it; we shrink from believing that he really felt the force of temptation, or that the forsakenness on the cross and the momentary doubt have parallels in our human life. In other words, we make that divine Life a mere mimic representation of griefs that were not real, and surprises that were feigned, and sorrows that were theatrical.

21.

CHRIST'S TEACHING.

I SAT daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.—Matt. xxvi, 55.

CHRIST taught much that God is love. He spoke a great deal of the Father which is in heaven. He instructed in those parables which required thoughtful attention,

exercise of mind, and a gentle, sensitive conscience. He spoke didactic, calm discourses, very engaging, but with little excitement in them; such discourses as the Sermon on the Mount, respecting goodness, purity, duties; which, assuredly, if anyone were to venture so to speak before a modern congregation, would be stigmatized as a moral essay. Accordingly his success was much less marked than that of John. No crowds were baptized as his followers; one hundred and twenty in an upper chamber appear to have been the fruits of his life work. To teach so, is assuredly not the way to make strong impressions; but it is the way to work deeply, gloriously—for eternity. How many of John's terrified Pharisees and Sadducees, suppose we, retained the impression six months?

22.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

I SAY unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.—Matt. v, 44, 45.

THERE are two erroneous views held respecting the character of the Sermon on the Mount . . . The man of the world

says, "It is morality only, and that is the whole of religion." The mistaken religionist says, "It is morality only, not the entire essence of Christianity." In opposition to both these views we maintain that the Sermon on the Mount contains the sum and substance of Christianity. . . . The morality which it teaches is *disinterested* goodness—goodness not for the sake of the blessing that follows it, but for its own sake, and because it is right. "Love your enemies," is the Gospel precept. Why? Because if you love them you shall be blessed; and if you do not, cursed? No; but . . . "that ye may be the children of"—that is, may be like—"your Father which is in heaven." The second peculiarity of Christianity—and this, too, is an essential peculiarity of this sermon—is that it teaches and enforces the law of self-sacrifice . . . the very law and spirit of the blessed cross of Christ.

23.

CHRIST'S MIRACLES.

HE did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.—Matt. xiii, 58.

MIRACLES have only done their work when they teach us the glory and the awfulness that surrounds our common life.

In a miracle God for one moment shows himself, that we may remember it is he that is at work when no miracle is seen.

24.

CHRIST'S WILL.

I SEEK not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.—John v, 30.

YOU ask if Christ's will was strong, simply because upheld by the Spirit without measure in him? I should reply, "Because he was a perfect Man." Perfect man is *manhood* with all its appetites, affections, moral sense, aspirations, intellect, in complete equilibrium. . . . It was that entire harmony with the mind of God which made his will so strong. Self-will is weak sometimes even in a Napoleon.

25.

CHRIST'S SINLESSNESS.

FOR we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.—Heb. iv, 15.

THERE was no germ of sin in Christ; for sin is the acting of an evil will. Sin resides in the will, not in the natural appetites. There was no germ of sin in him; but

there were germs of feeling, natural and innocent, which show that he was in all points tempted like as we are.

26.

CHRIST WAS TEMPTED.

THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.—Matt. iv, 1.

THE temptation of Christ caused suffering. He suffered from the force of desire. Though there was no hesitation whether to obey or not, no strife in the will, in the act of mastery there was pain. There was self-denial—there was obedience at the expense of tortured natural feeling. There was no reluctance in the *will*. But there was no struggling; no shudder in the inward sensations; no remembrance that the cross was sharp; no recollection of the family at Bethany, and the pleasant walk and dear companionship which he was about to leave. . . . Not by the reluctancy of a sinful sensation, but by the quivering and the anguish of natural feeling when it is trampled upon by lofty will—Jesus *suffered*, being tempted. He was “tempted like as we are.” Remember this.

27.

CHRIST'S LOVE.

GREATER love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.—John xv, 13, 14.

HIS was a love which insult could not ruffle nor ribaldry imbitter, and which only grew sweeter and sweeter. The sympathy of Christ extends to the frailties of human nature, not to its hardened guilt. He is “touched with the feeling of our *infirmities*.” There is not a single throb in a single human bosom that does not thrill at once with more than electric speed up to the mighty heart of God.

28.

CHRIST'S ATONEMENT.

GOD was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.—2 Cor. v, 19.

HERE is the mystery of the atonement. God is reconciled to men for Christ's sake. Earnestly I insist that the atonement is through Christ. God is reconciled to humanity in Christ, then to us through him—“God was in Christ.” It was a divine humanity. To that humanity God is reconciled;

there could be no enmity between God and Christ; "I and my Father are one." To all those in whom Christ's Spirit is, God imputes the righteousness which is as yet only seminal, germinal; a seed, not a tree; a spring, not a river; an aspiration, not an attainment; a righteousness in faith, not a righteousness in works. It is not, then, an actual righteousness, but an imputed righteousness. Hence we see what is meant by saying, "Reconciled or atoned through Christ." We do not mean that each man reconciles himself, as Christ did, by being righteous; but we mean that God views him favorably as partaking of that humanity which has been once exhibited on earth a holy, perfect, and divine thing.

29.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

HE shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.—Isa. liii, 11.

THE sacrifice of Christ was a voluntary one, else had it been no sacrifice at all; therefore we read, "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself." The cross is humbleness, love, self-surrender. We degrade his life and death by pictures of his physical suffering and his bodily agony on the cross. For it

was not the nails that pierced his hands which wrung from him the exceeding bitter cry, but the iron that had entered his soul. The act of Christ is the act of humanity—that which all humanity is bound to do. . . . Vicarious for all, yet binding upon all.

30.

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

AND they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.—Rev. v, 9.

BLOOD does not please God. “As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner.” Do you think God has pleasure in the blood of the righteous? blood merely as blood? suffering merely, as if suffering had in it mysterious virtue? No, my brethren! God can be satisfied with that only which pertains to the conscience and the will; so says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews: “Sacrifices could never make the comers thereunto perfect.” The blood of Christ was sanctified by the will with which he shed it. How could the Father be *satisfied* with the death of Christ unless he saw in the sacrifice mirrored his own

love? Agony does not satisfy God—agony only satisfied Moloch. Nothing satisfies God but the voluntary sacrifice of love. The pain of Christ gave God no pleasure—only the love that was tested by pain—the love of perfect obedience. “He was obedient unto death.” The pain, the blood, the death, were the last and highest evidence of entire surrender.

31.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTED BODY.

BEHOLD my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.—Luke xxiv, 39.

IT is fancied that in the history of Jesus's existence, once for a limited period and for definite purposes, he took part in frail humanity; but that when that purpose was accomplished the Man forever perished, and the Spirit re-ascended, to unite again with pure, unmixed Deity. But Scripture has taken peculiar pains to give assurance of the continuance of his humanity. It has carefully recorded his resurrection. After that he passed through space from spot to spot; when he was in one place he was not in another. . . . The present manhood of Christ conveys this deeply important truth, that the divine heart is human in its sympathies.

FEBRUARY.

DAILY THOUGHTS.

	FEB.
Christ Within Us.....	1
The Holy Spirit.....	2
The Trinity.....	3
Emptiness of Life.....	4
Disappointments of Life.....	5
Meaning of Life.....	6
Your Life Work.....	7
Guidance.....	8
Possibilities.....	9
Repining at Circumstances.....	10
Serving God at a Loss.....	11
Circumstances are Sent by God.....	12
Nature Helps the Good.....	13
Everyone Has a Mission.....	14
Characteristics of Children.....	15
Doubting the Word of Children.....	16
Early Religion of Children.....	17
Teaching Godliness to Children.....	18
Youth.....	19
Old Age.....	20
Parents.....	21
Home.....	22
Teachers.....	23
Teachers.....	24
Knowledge Shall Vanish.....	25
Worthless Knowledge.....	26
Knowledge of God.....	27
Growth Requires Time.....	28
Growth by Doing.....	29

1.

CHRIST WITHIN US.

GOD would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles ; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.—Col. i, 27.

THE Spirit was not given, we are told, because Jesus was not yet glorified. It was necessary for the Son to disappear as an outward authority, in order that he might reappear as an inward principle of life. Our salvation is no longer God manifested in Christ *without* us, but a Christ *within* us, the hope of glory.

2.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.—John xiv, 26.

CHRIST is the voice of God *without* the man—the Spirit is the voice of God *within* the man. The highest revelation is not made by Christ, but comes directly from the universal Mind to our minds. The Holy Ghost may mingle with man in three ways—with his body, and then you have what is called a miracle ; with his spirit, and then you

have that exalted feeling which finds vent in what is called "tongues ;" or with his intellect, and then you have prophecy.

3.

THE TRINITY.

I WILL pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever. —John xiv, 16.

IN that Unity of Essence there are three living Powers, which we call Persons, distinct from each other.

A man's will is not his affections, neither are his affections his thoughts, and it would be imperfect and incomplete to say that these are mere qualities in the man. . . . It is the law of being, that in proportion as you rise from lower to higher life the parts are more distinctly developed, while yet the unity becomes more entire. You find, for example, in the lowest forms of animal life one organ performs several functions, one organ being at the same time heart and brain and blood vessels. But when you come to man you find all these various functions existing in different organs, and every organ more distinctly developed ; and yet the unity of a man is a higher unity

than that of a limpet. . . . We apply all this to the mind of God. . . . The first power of consciousness in which God is made known to us is as the Father, the Author of our being. He is the Author of all life. In this sense he is not merely our Father as Christians, but the Father of mankind; and not merely the Father of mankind, but the Father of creation. . . . He is the Lord of life. In this respect God to us is as law—as the collected laws of the universe; and therefore to offend against law and bring down the result of transgressing law is, said in Scripture language, to provoke the wrath of God the Father.

The second way through which the personality and consciousness of God has been revealed to us is as the Son.

There is a nearer, a closer, and a more enduring relation in which God stands to us—that is, the relation of the Spirit. If a man keep the commandments “God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” So that the spiritual manifestation of God to us is that whereby he blends himself with the soul of man.

4

THE EMPTINESS OF LIFE.

REJOICE, O young man, in thy youth ; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes : but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.—Eccles. xi, 9.

YOU ask what is the meaning of Keble's line:

“ Who for the spangles wears the funeral pall ? ”

He has just said, that the earth would not be worth having, if it were all, even though affection's kiss brightens it often ; and then compares these kisses to spangles on the pall. Who would be in a coffin for the pleasure of having a velvet pall with spangles over him ? What matters it to the dead ? He means, Who would live this dead life for the sake of a few moments of affectionate happiness, or rather a good many, for he says “ oft ? ” I reply, “ I would.”

5.

THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF LIFE.

AND it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of

communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?—Luke xxiv, 15-17.

AS we mix in life there comes, especially to sensitive natures, a temptation to distrust. In young life we throw ourselves with unbounded and glorious confidence on such as we think well of—an error soon corrected, for we soon find out—too soon—that men and women are not what they seem. Then comes disappointment; and the danger is a reaction of desolating and universal distrust. . . . The only preservation from this withering of the heart is love. The strength of affection is a proof not of the worthiness of the object, but of the largeness of the soul which loves. There are three great principles in life which weave its *warp* and *woof*, apparently incompatible with each other, yet they harmonize, and, in their blending, create this strange life of ours. The first is, our fate is in our own hands, and our blessedness and misery is the exact result of our own acts. The second is, “There’s a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will.” The third is, “The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;” but time and chance happen to them all. Accidents, human will, the shaping will of Deity; these things make up life.

6.

THE MEANING OF LIFE.

BUT that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.—Luke viii, 15.

THIS life is the state of human babyhood. Life here is infancy. He who has not found out how directly or indirectly to make everything converge toward his soul's sanctification, has as yet missed the meaning of this life.

7.

YOUR LIFE WORK.

FOR God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.—I Thess. iv, 7.

WHAT was it which nerved the apostle's soul to bear reproach and false witness? Was it not this? I have a mission; "I am called to be an apostle through the will of God." Well, this should be *our* strength. Called to be a carpenter, a politician, a tradesman, a physician—is he irreverent who believes that? God sent me here to cut wood, to direct justly, to make shoes, to teach children.

8.

GUIDANCE.

THE Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.—2 Thess. iii, 5.

GOD has so decreed, that, except in childhood, our dependence must be on our own souls. “The way of truth is slow, hard, winding, often turning on itself.” Good and evil grow up in the field of the world almost inseparably. The scanning of error is necessary to the comprehension and belief of truth. Therefore it must be done solitarily. Nay, such an infallible guide could not be given us without danger. Such a one ever near would prove not a guide to us, but an hindrance to the use of our own eyes and soul. Reverence for such a guide would soon degenerate into slavishness, passiveness, and prostration of mind.

9.

POSSIBILITIES.

TAKE heed therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness.—Luke xi, 35.

THE untold world of agony contained in that expression, “a lost soul!”—agony exactly in proportion to the nobleness of

original powers. For it is a strange and mournful truth that the qualities which enable men to shine are exactly those which minister to the worst ruin. God's highest gifts—talent, beauty, feeling, imagination, power; they carry with them the possibility of the highest heaven and the lowest hell. Be sure that it is by that which is highest in you that you may be lost. It is the awful warning, and not the excuse of evil, that the light which leads astray is light from heaven.

10.

REPINING AT CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.—1 Cor. xii, 21.

THERE are few temptations more common to ardent spirits than that which leads them to repine at the lot in which they are cast, believing that in some other situation they could serve God better; and therefore to every such man St. Paul speaks, telling him that it is his duty to try to be himself—simply to try to do his own duty (1 Cor. xii); for here in this world we are nothing apart from its strange and curious clock-

work; and if each man had the spirit of self-surrender, the spirit of the cross, it would not matter to him whether he were doing the work of the mainspring or of one of the inferior parts.

11.

SERVING GOD AT A LOSS.

AND when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him.—Luke xxiii, 33.

LET us get rid of that false notion, that we are sure to win if we are true to conscience! No! often—most often—you must serve God at a loss. Surely the cross should teach us that in this world doing right and being true is not “the best policy,” as the world understands it. The lives of the apostles, the lives of all God’s best and noblest, should teach us this lesson. Beyond, beyond—ah, beyond the present we must look for victory. We are here to control the circumstances in which we are placed, and transmute them, and get good and spirituality out of them. . . . All that circumstances have done when they make a man restless is just this, to show that he is not incorporated with the Rock of ages.

12.

CIRCUMSTANCES ARE SENT BY GOD.

JOSEPH said unto them, Fear not : for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me ; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.—Gen. 1, 19, 20.

HEARTS are linked to hearts by God. The friend on whose fidelity you count, whose success in life flushes your cheek with honest satisfaction—that friend, given you by circumstances over which you had no control, was God's own gift.

13.

ALL NATURE HELPS THE GOOD.

WE know that all things work together for good to them that love God.—Rom. viii, 28.

MAN is the weakest and yet the strongest of living creatures—because he obeys the laws of nature he has the strength of the lion, the speed of the antelope ; he bids the sun be his painter, and the lightning carry his messages ; because he is the servant, therefore he is the master. This is precisely analogous to the way in which a man becomes spiritually strong. If he stands, upon his own will, takes his own way, the strongest fails at last. . . . It was no mere figure of poetry in Deborah's

triumphant song, "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." Everything fights against a man who is not on God's side; while he who does right, not because it is profitable, but because it is right, who loves the truth, arms himself with God's power—the universe is on his side.

14.

EVERYONE HAS A MISSION.

THIS ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.—Acts i, 25.

EVERYONE has a mission in this world to accomplish. That is the destiny given him to work out. Judas had such a mission. God had appointed him to salvation by his call as truly as the other apostles. . . . Judas was sent into the world to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. God "did not will the sinner's death." Surely, surely the Bible is plain enough on this point. But Judas would not accept his mission, and then that which was given in blessing turned to curse. His destiny crushed him: he went to his *own* place, the place he had prepared for himself, not the place prepared by God. So it is with you and me. No decree of God has insured

our misery. "All things work together for good to those who love God." But the same things work together for evil if they do not love God.

15.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN.

AND the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.—Zech. viii, 5.

THE characteristics of childhood are instability of character, unfixedness of opinion, and credulity, all of which, natural and even graceful in a child, are in a man weakness, unfitness for life, and folly. Manhood is truth, love, likeness to Christ.

Do not ask a child to sacrifice all enjoyment for the sake of others; but let him learn, first, not to enjoy at the expense or the disadvantage or suffering of another. To ask "Why?" is the best Christian lesson for a child. Not the "*why*" which is the language of disobedience, but that "*why*" which demands for all phenomena a cause. It was this which led Moses on Mount Horeb to say, "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." So it was that Moses found out God.

16.

DOUBTING THE WORD OF CHILDREN.

WHOSO shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.—Matt. xviii, 6.

A MAN'S character and mind are molded for good or evil far more by the forms of imagination which surround his childhood, than by any subsequent scientific training.

I would engage, if it were not a Satanic task, to make any child a liar by cross-questioning every assertion, and showing him that I suspected every thought and feeling. He would soon learn to dwell in the region of plausibilities, and cease to breathe the fresh, free air of unconscious truth.

17.

EARLY RELIGION OF CHILDREN.

BRETHREN, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.—I Cor. xiv, 20.

WE expect in the religion of the child the experience which can only be true in the religion of the man. We force into their lips the language which describes the wrestling of the soul with God. It is twenty years too soon.

God in his awfulness, the thought of mystery which scathes the soul, how can they know *that* yet before they have got the thews and sinews of the man's heart to master such a thought? They know nothing yet—they *ought* to know nothing yet—of God but as the Father who is around their beds; they *ought* to see nothing yet but heaven and angels ascending and descending.

The time does come to every child, as it came to the childhood of Christ, when the love of the earthly parent is felt to be second to the love of the heavenly Father; but *this is not first*, “for that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural.” . . . You cannot *force* love to God. By no outrageous leaps, but by slow walking, is the spiritual love reached.

18.

TEACHING GODLINESS TO CHILDREN.

BODILY exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.—I Tim. iv, 8.

YOU tell him [your son] that if he will be good, all men will love him. You say that honesty is the best policy, yet in your heart

of hearts you know that you are leading him on by a delusion. Christ was good. Was he loved by all? In proportion as he, your son, is like Christ, he will be loved, not by the many, but by the few. Yet you were right in teaching your son this; you told him what was true, truer than he could comprehend. It *is* better to be honest and good, better than he can know or dream, better even in this life; better by so much as *being* good is better than *having* good.

19.

YOUTH.

WHEREWITHAL shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.—Psalm cxix, 9.

THIS is the lesson we press upon the young: Keep unspotted from the world. My young brethren, let it be impressed upon you—NOW is a time, infinite in its value for eternity, which will never return again. Sleep not; learn that there is a very solemn work of heart which must be done while the stillness of the garden of your Gethsemane gives you time. Now, or never. The treasures at your command are infinite. Treasures of time,

treasures of youth, treasures of opportunity that grown-up men would sacrifice everything they have to possess.

20.

OLD AGE.

EVEN to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.—Isa. xlvi, 4.

WHEN the first gray hairs become visible —when the unwelcome truth fastens itself upon the mind that a man is no longer going up the hill, but down, and that the sun is already westering, he looks back on things behind. Now this is a natural feeling, but is it the high Christian tone of feeling? We who have an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, what have we to do with things past? What matter if, as the outward perish, the inward is renewed day by day? What matter if we see it [the passing of youthful freshness] in those that are dear to us—if we know that in them, too, the same glorious reproduction is taking place? So is the joy of old age. Deep, calm, nearness to God.

21.

PARENTS.

CHILDREN, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.—Col. iii, 20, 21.

THERE is scarcely one here who cannot trace back his present religious character to some impression, in early life, from one or other of his parents—it may be from a tone, a look, a word, a habit, or even bitter, miserable exclamation.

No one ever loved child, brother, sister, too much. It is not the intensity of affection, but its interference with truth and duty, that makes idolatry. And hence Christ says, “If any man love father or mother more than me, he is not worthy of me.”

22.

HOME.

AND he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.—Luke xv, 20.

THE friend, the husband, the citizen, are formed at the domestic hearth. Influence is given at home. It is God's plan. He gave the father to impart strength of will, and the

mother, tenderness of affection. Home is the one place in all this world where hearts are sure of each other. It is the place of confidences. Let a man travel where he will, home is the place to which "his heart untraveled fondly turns." He is to double all pleasure there. He is to divide all pain. A *happy home* is the single spot of rest which a man has upon this earth for the cultivation of his noblest sensibilities. And now, my brethren, if that be the description of home, is God's place of rest your home? Walk abroad and alone by night. That awful other world, in the stillness and the solemn deep of the eternities above, is it your home?

23.

TEACHERS.

THEY that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.—Dan. xii, 3.

GOD appointed a princess to instruct Moses, as if to honor the teacher's office. There are great mistakes on this point. People say, "Any man will do." But your watch spring is broken—do you give it to a blacksmith? Its wheels are deranged—do you confide it to a wheelwright? No; it is too delicate. Can

a common mind guide that delicate, ethereal, mysterious thing—a child's soul? We must understand human nature, read hearts. We want first-rate men. Thirty-five hundred years ago an Egyptian princess took a poor man's child and taught it. The result of that education is not over yet. It is not views which mold character, but a spirit; since our mysterious being is only capable of being stirred by the higher springs of action, trust, reliance, reverence, love; and when trust is gone, neither wisdom nor truth from the lips of a teacher can avail anything.

24.

TEACHERS.

INASMUCH as ye have done it unto one of the least of of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.—Matt. xxv, 40.

AN humble teacher in a school, or a missionary, can often but only just live. Gifts that are showy and gifts that please—before these the world yields her homage, while the lowly teachers of the poor and ignorant are forgotten. Only remember that in the sight of the everlasting Eye, the one is creating sounds which perish with the hour that gave them birth, the other is doing a work which is forever.

To teach a few Sunday school children week after week commonplace, simple truths—persevering in spite of dullness and mean capacities—is a more glorious occupation than the highest meditations or creations of genius which edify or instruct only our own solitary soul. This is the lesson for all; for teachers who lay their heads down at night, sickening over their thankless task. Remember the power of *indirect* influences, those which distil from a life, not from a sudden, brilliant effort. The former never fail, the latter often. Not in the flushing of a pupil's cheek, or the glistening of an attentive eye; not in the shining results of an examination, does your real success lie. It lies in that invisible influence on character, which He alone can read who counts the seven thousand nameless ones in Israel.

25.

KNOWLEDGE SHALL VANISH.

WHETHER there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.
—I Cor. xiii, 8.

“**K**NOWLEDGE shall vanish away,” for it is but a temporary state of the human mind. For instance, that of the physician,

which arises out of the existence of disease ; where there is no disease, his knowledge would disappear. So also of the knowledge of the lawyer, which depends on human crime ; were there no wrongs done, the necessity for legal knowledge would be at an end.

26.

WORTHLESS KNOWLEDGE.

IF any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.—I Cor. viii, 2.

PAUL spoke of instruction not merely in history, geography, or grammar, but also of instruction in the Bible as worthless, without training in humility and charity. He said, "Mere knowledge is worth little ;" but then by knowledge he meant not merely knowledge without Christian doctrine, but knowledge without love. . . . "As he ought to know." That single word "as" is the point of the sentence, for it is not *what* to know, but *how* to know, which includes all real knowledge.

27.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

BE not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.—Rom. xii, 2.

AFTER twenty years God met Jacob again; but this second intercourse was of a very different character. It was no longer God the Forgiver, God the Protector, God the covenanting Love, that met Jacob; but God the Awful, the Unnamable, whose breath blasts. You would have expected the darker vision of experience to come first. First the storm struggle of the soul; then the vision of peace. . . . The awful feelings about Life and God are *not* those which characterize our earlier years. It is quite natural that in the first espousals of the soul in its freshness to God, bright and hopeful feelings should be the predominant or only ones. Joy marks, and ought to mark, early religion.

28.

GROWTH REQUIRES TIME.

AND he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground ; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.—Mark iv, 26, 27.

AFTER long years work is visible. In agriculture you cannot see the growth. Pass that country two months after, and there is a difference. We acquire firmness and experience incessantly. Every action, every word, every meal is part of our trial and our discipline. We are assuredly ripening or else blighting. We are not conscious of those changes which go on quietly and gradually in the soul. We only count the shocks in our journey. Ambitions die, grace grows, as life goes on.

29.

GROWTH BY DOING.

I AM the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ; for without me ye can do nothing.—John xv, 5.

IT is by what we do, and not by what is done for us that we become strong or good. Is not all our higher life a perpetual struggle to

reach a horizon of duty, which is unbounded and ever widening before us, as we fulfill its claims? We do not reach spirituality of character by spasmodic and unnatural efforts to crush the nature that is within us, but by slow and patient care to develop and disengage it from its evil.

MARCH.

DAILY THOUGHTS.

	MARCH.
Character.	I
Our Body.	2
Body, Soul, and Spirit.	3
The Mind.	4
How to Cultivate Memory.	5
The Memory of the Wicked	6
Conscience.	7
Conviction.	8
Our Will.	9
Religion.	10
Worship.	11
The Worship of the Virgin.	12
The Heathen.	13
Wise Men from the East	14
Missions.	15
The Church.	16
The Unitarian View	17
Christianity.	18
What is Prayer?	19
Absurd Prayers.	20
How to Pray.	21
Teach Us How to Pray.	22
Baptism.	23
Infant Baptism	24
The Two Sacraments	25
The Lord's Supper.	26
The Sabbath Abolished to Christians.	27
The Sabbath a Law Now.	28
The Sabbath Necessary Now	29
The Puritan Sabbath.	30
The Sabbath of Eternity.	31

1.

CHARACTER.

TRAIN up a child in the way he should go : and when he is old, he will not depart from it.—Prov. xxii, 6.

GOD'S way from old time has been to rely upon the training of the heart and habits for the illumination of the understanding. You may teach a child these truths in ten minutes; but to teach them as God would have them taught, to teach them in any way that shall not be worthless, that demands a long, holy, obedient, humble life. Nothing falsifies the character like softness; the want of power to say No when it would give pain. We have one thing, and only one, to do here on earth—to win the character of heaven before we die.

2.

OUR BODY.

WHAT! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price.—I Cor. vi, 19, 20.

THE ugliest man I ever knew I actually at last thought handsome; and I do not believe that any beauty would seem surpassingly beautiful after it had once reminded of folly

or evil. It is the outward form of the body alone which is transitory. Itself shall be renewed—a nobler, more glorious form, fitted for a higher and spiritual existence. . . . Sins of sensuality and animal indulgence are *against* the body. Our bodies, which are “members” of Christ, to be ruled by his Spirit, become by such sins unfit for immortality with Christ. This is an awful truth. Sins committed against the body affect that wonderful tissue which we call the nervous system; the source of all our acutest suffering and intensest blessing is rendered so susceptible by God as to be at once our punishment or reward. There is not a sin of indulgence, gluttony, intemperance, or licentiousness of any form which does not write its terrible retribution on our bodies.

3.

BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT.

I PRAY God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.—I Thess. v, 23.

WHEN the apostle speaks of the body, what he means is the animal life—that which we share in common with beasts, birds, and reptiles; . . . that which he calls “soul”

is the same as that which he calls, in another place, the "natural man." These powers are divisible into two branches—the intellectual powers and the moral sense. The intellectual powers man has by nature. Man need not be regenerated in order to possess the power of reasoning. The moral sense distinguishes between right and wrong. . . . By the spirit he means that life in man which, in his natural state, is in such an embryo condition that it can scarcely be said to exist at all—that which is called out into power and vitality by regeneration. The body—the human affections and passions; the soul, according to the philosophy of that age—the rational powers; and the spirit—that on which God directly operates, and which appreciates the things of God.

4.

THE MIND.

THIS people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.—Matt. xv, 8.

HE is Mind. Mind, properly speaking, has no *place*. Of love, generosity, thought—can you say where?

5.

HOW TO CULTIVATE MEMORY.

THEN spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day.—Gen. xli, 9.

MEMORY depends on two circumstances—attention and the laws of association. No one can hope to remember who has not acquired the power of concentrating his attention. We recollect circumstances witnessed and things learned in childhood, whereas we forget the events of yesterday; and this because when we come into the world all is new, startling, and arrests the attention. In later life we are familiar with all, and our attention is languid. . . . The highest of all is that memory which suggests by *analogy*. It is this which furnishes the orator with illustrations and parallels. . . . If your verbal or your contiguous memory be tenacious, you may retain the circumstances; but if not, all will be confused. But if you call in the aid of eyesight, localizing this battle there, and tracing that invasion from town to town, you have got a local habitation as well as a name for your facts. Without method memory is useless. Detached facts are practically valueless. Persons not accustomed to it imagine that a speech is learnt by

heart. If anyone attempted that plan, either he must have a marvelous memory or else he would break down three times out of five. It simply depends upon correct arrangement. The words and sentences are left to the moment; the thoughts methodized beforehand.

6.

THE MEMORY OF THE WICKED.

THERE is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.—
Isa. lvii, 21.

IT only needs that the body which buries recollection for a time should be dissolved, and then there begins the eternity of a hell of recollections—when every act of bygone guilt which has not been sunk in the blood of Christ shall be as fresh and vivid before a sinner's eyes as it was at the moment when it was committed. . . . Brethren, each of us knows what his past has been. I ask you, Will it bear to come up again? Or do your hearts tell you there is meaning of terrible emphasis in these words, "mire and dirt?" If so, there is but one way to keep it all hidden in the heart's depths. It is to have it buried there by the transforming, purifying, calming power of Christ.

7.

CONSCIENCE.

IF our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.—I John iii, 21.

CONSCIENCE is the supreme tribunal erected within a man's own soul. There is no appeal to the opinion of privileged persons. The apostle Paul would not allow them to condemn for conscientious acts. "Let no man judge you."

Do not fancy yourself safe and forgiven because you *feel* no burden. There is such a thing as a laden slave sleeping on his burden. The first stages of mortification alone are painful; after that the benumbed senses cease to warn. The frost-bitten man is warned by strangers. So is it in paralysis of conscience.

8.

CONVICTION.

IT is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.—Rom. xiv, 21.

SEIZE the moment of strong conviction, of tenderness, of apprehension. Quick! quick! it will not come again. Do what *seems* to you to be right; it is only so that you will at last learn by the grace of God to see

clearly what *is* right. A man thinks within himself that it is God's law and God's will that he should act thus and thus. You *must* so act. He is responsible for the opinions he holds, and still more for the way in which he arrived at them. "You must obey your conscience." For no man's conscience gets so seared by doing what is wrong unknowingly, as by doing that which appears to be wrong to his conscience.

9.

OUR WILL.

I CAN do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—Phil. iv, 13.

IT is *will* that makes the difference between man and man; not knowledge, not opinions, not devoutness, not feeling, but will—the power to be. It is the belief of the savage that the spirit of every enemy he slays enters into him, and becomes added to his own, accumulating a warrior's strength; therefore he slays all he can. It is true in the spiritual warfare. Every sin you slay—the spirit of that sin passes into you transformed into strength. The hardest, the severest, the last lesson which man has to learn upon the earth, is submission to the will of God. It is the hardest lesson because to

our blinded eyesight it often seems a cruel will. All that saintly experience ever had to teach resolves itself into this, the lesson how to say affectionately, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." Slowly and stubbornly our hearts acquiesce in that.

10.

RELIGION.

PURE religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.—James i, 27.

RELIGION is a thing of the heart, and not of the intellect ; as the Bible so strongly tells us, "The world by wisdom knew not God." Religion is the banquet of the spirit, not the feast of the mind ; and therefore the danger is ever present when men begin to listen to the sermon as a manifestation of intellectual force, and not for its spiritual power.

11.

WORSHIP.

THE hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him.—John iv, 23.

REVERENCE, veneration, awe, are a class of feelings which belong to the imagination, and are neither good nor bad ; they may

go along with religion, but also they may not. A man may kneel to sublime things, yet never have bent his heart to goodness and purity. A man may be reverential, and yet impure. What we mean by "worship" is the highest reverence of the soul: adoration, awe; it may be, even vague devoutness; "Ye know not what." It is not merely what a man *professes* to reverence that constitutes worship. To be spiritual, worship must be intelligent.

12.

THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.

THE angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.—Luke i, 28.

I SPENT last evening with Mrs. Jameson and Lady Byron. The conversation turned at first chiefly on the gradual changes in the feeling toward the Virgin. It seems that the earliest appearance of the Virgin and Child dates in the fifth century; before that the Virgin was alone. The first representations of this change bore a striking resemblance to the heathen statues and relievos of Juno nursing the infant Mars. Then came pictures in which the Virgin is represented as crowned by her Son—at first kneeling before him, then

sitting a little lower than he, then on a level with him. For many ages she appears as intercessor between Christ the Judge and the guilty earth. Mariolatry contains the sublime truth of the adorableness and heavenliness of female purity. Let us say, that *what* they worship ignorantly is Christ. Whom they ignorantly worship, let us declare unto them. Christ, their unknown God. Do not let us satisfy ourselves by saying as a watchword, "Christ, not Mary;" say, rather, "In Christ are all that they find in Mary." The mother in the Son, the womanly in the soul of Christ. Divine honor to the feminine side of his character, joyful and unvarying acknowledgment that in Christ there is revelation of the divineness of submission and love and purity and long-suffering.

13.

THE HEATHEN.

ASK of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.—Psalm ii, 8.

MAN is God's child, and the sin of man consists in perpetually living as if it were false. It is the sin of the heathen; and what is your mission to him but to tell him he is God's child and not living up to his privilege?

14.

WISE MEN FROM THE EAST.

IN the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.—Matt. ii, 1, 2.

THE Magian system was called the system of light about seven centuries before Christ. A great reformer (Zoroaster) had appeared, who either restored the system to its purity, or created out of it a new system. He said that light is eternal—that the Lord of the universe is light, but because there was an eternal light there was also an eternal possibility of the absence of light. Light and darkness, therefore, were the eternal principles of the universe—not equal principles, but one the negation of the other. He taught that the soul of man needs light—a light external to itself, as well as in itself. As the eye cannot see in darkness, and is useless, so is there a capacity in the soul for light. . . . The law given by the Magian, revealed by the eternal stars, was “the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.” “Let us meditate on the adorable Light; it shall guide our intellects,” is the most sacred verse of the Hindoo sacred books.

15.

MISSIONS.

AND he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.—Mark xvi, 15.

IN matters worldly, the more occupations, duties, a man has, the more certain is he of doing all imperfectly. In the things of God this is reversed. . . . He who is most liberal in the case of a foreign famine or a distant mission will be found to have only learned more liberal love toward the poor and the unspiritualized of his own land.

16.

THE CHURCH.

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.—Matt. xxv, 1, 2.

THERE is a Church visible and a Church invisible; the latter consists of those spiritual persons who fulfill the notion of the ideal Church; the former is the Church as it exists in any particular age, embracing within it all who profess Christianity, whether they be proper or improper members of its body. . . . It is of the visible Church Paul writes, when he reproveth their particular errors; and Christ, too, speaks

of the same in such parables as that of the net gathering in fishes both good and bad, and the field of wheat which was mingled with tares.

17.

THE UNITARIAN VIEW.

AFTER that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? —Gal. iv, 9.

THE Unitarian view is that God requires nothing to reconcile him to us, that he is reconciled already, that the only thing requisite is to reconcile man to God. It also declares that there is no wrath in God toward sinners, for punishment does not manifest indignation. Nothing can be more false, unphilosophical, and unscriptural. . . . Take one passage [the text, Gal. iv, 9]; Paul is there describing the Christian state, and he declares that the being recognized of God is more characteristic of the Gospel state than recognizing God. "Know God." Here is a man reconciled to God. "Art known of him." Here is God reconciled to man. Paul holds it a more adequate representation of the Gospel to say, "Ye are known of God," that is, God is rec-

onciled to you—than to say, Ye know God, that is, ye are reconciled to God.

The Unitarian maintains a divine humanity—a blessed, blessed truth. There is a truth more blessed still—the humanity of Deity. Before the world was there was that in the mind of God which we may call the humanity of his Divinity. It is called in Scripture the Word, the Son, the form of God.

18.

CHRISTIANITY.

THOU shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.—
Luke x, 27.

CHRISTIAN life, brethren, is not rest. “It is high time to awake out of sleep.” Christian life is not making time pass away comfortably. “Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion.” Christian life is not reward. “If in this life only we have hope in Christ,” then “we are of all men most miserable.” Christian life is work, trial, earnestness, victory. To adore Christ, love Christ, trust Christ—that is Christianity.

19.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

AFTER this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.—Matt. vi, 9.

WHAT is prayer? To connect every thought with the thought of God. To look on everything as his work and his appointment. To submit every thought, wish, and resolve to him. To feel his presence so that it shall restrain us even in our wildest joy. That is prayer. Prayer is that communion of the mind with God through which our will becomes at last merged into his will. The highest prayer or communion with God is a life of love.

20.

ABSURD PRAYERS.

YE ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.—James iv, 3.

OUR vindictive feelings we impute to God. We would revenge, therefore we think he would. And in this spirit, "Forgive us" means "Forego thy vengeance. Do not retaliate. I have injured thee, but lo! I apologize; I lay in the dust. Bear no malice, indulge no rancor, O God." This is the heathen prayer

which we offer up to God. In our purest moods, when we kneel to pray, or gather round the altar, down into the very holy of holies sweep these foul birds of the air, villain fancies, demon thoughts. The germ of life, the small seed of impression, is gone—where, you know not. Inattentiveness of spirit produced by want of spiritual interest is the first cause.

21.

HOW TO PRAY.

I WILL pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.—I Cor. xiv, 15.

“**G**OD is in heaven, and thou upon earth : therefore let thy words be few.” To men we use rhetoric, eloquence, because they are influenced by it. To God we use the simplest, shortest words we can find, because eloquence is only air and noise to him. That prayer which does not succeed in moderating our wish, in changing the passionate desire into silent submission, the anxious tremulous expectation into silent surrender, is no true prayer, and proves that we have not the spirit of true prayer. . . . Pray till prayer makes you forget your own wish, and leave it or merge it into God’s will.

22.

TEACH US HOW TO PRAY.

THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.—John xvii, 1.

MY Saviour, fill up the blurred and blotted sketch which my clumsy hand has drawn of a divine life, with the fullness of thy perfect picture. I feel the beauty which I cannot realize: robe me in thine unutterable purity. Bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Take what I cannot give; my heart, body, thoughts, time, abilities, money, health, strength, nights, days, youth, age, and spend them in thy service, O my crucified Master, Redeemer, God. O, let not these be mere words! Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee. My heart is athirst for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

23.

BAPTISM.

THEN cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.—Matt. iii, 13.

WHEN it is objected to the Romanist that there is no evidence in the life of the baptized child different from that given by the

unbaptized, he replies, "The miracle is invisible." . . . In other words, Christ has declared that it is with everyone born of the Spirit as with the wind, "Thou hearest the sound thereof." But the Romanist distinctly holds that you *cannot* hear the sound—that the wind hath blown, but there is no sound; that the Spirit hath descended, and there are no fruits whereby the tree is known.

The Catechism says : In baptism . . . I was *made* a child of God. Yes, coronation makes a sovereign ; but, paradoxical as it may seem, it can only *make* one who is a sovereign already.

In the Acts of the Apostles, Cornelius is baptized. On what grounds? To manufacture him into a child of God, or because he *was* the child of God? . . . The argument of Peter was very natural. He has the Spirit, therefore, give him the *symbol* of the Spirit. Let it be revealed to others what he is. He *is* heir to the inheritance, therefore give him the little deeds. He *is* of royal lineage—put the crown upon his head. He *is* a child of God—baptize him.

"Who shall forbid water, seeing these have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

24.

INFANT BAPTISM.

FOR the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.—I Cor. vii, 14.

THE very fundamental idea out of which infant baptism arises is, that the impression produced upon the mind and character of the child by the Christian parent makes the child one of a Christian community; and therefore, as Peter argued that Cornelius had received the Holy Ghost and so was to be baptized, just in the same way, as they are adopted into the Christian family and receive a Christian impression, the children of Christian parents are also to be baptized. Observe, also, the important truth, namely, the sacredness of the impression which arises from the close connection between parent and child. . . . There is scarcely one here who cannot trace back his present religious character to some impression, in early life, from one or other of his parents—a tone, a look, a word, a habit.

25.

THE TWO SACRAMENTS.

FOR as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.—I Cor. xi, 26.

THE Roman Catholic has seven sacraments; we have but two. . . . God has divinely ordained two material acts, to represent the truth that all nature is holy when everything in it reveals his sacredness to men; that all acts are holy when done in the spirit of Christ. Water, the simplest element, represents the sacredness and awfulness of all things. By the consecration of the commonest act of life—a meal—every act is made holy.

26.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

AND he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.—Luke xxii, 19.

THE reason for the institution of the Lord's Supper was, first, as a memorial of the Redeemer's sacrifice. . . . The second reason was to keep in mind Christ's second advent: "Till he come." When Christ left this world it was with a promise that he would return

again. So then, there are two feelings which belong to this Supper—abasement and triumph; abasement because everything that tells of Christ's sacrifice reminds us of human guilt; and triumph, because the idea of his coming again, "without sin unto salvation," is full of highest rapture.

27.

THE SABBATH ABOLISHED TO CHRISTIANS.

LET no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days : which are a shadow of things to come ; but the body is of Christ.—Col. ii, 16, 17.

IF the fourth commandment be binding still, that clause is unrepealed—"no manner of work;" and so, too, is that other important part, the sanctification of the seventh day and not the first. If the fourth commandment be not binding in these points, then there is nothing left but the broad, comprehensive ground taken by the apostle. The whole Sabbath is a shadow of things to come. . . . To whom may the Sabbath safely become a shadow? I reply, he that has the mind of Christ may exercise discretionary lordship over the Sabbath day. He who is in possession of the substance may let the shadow go. A man in health has

done with the prescriptions of the physician. But for an unspiritual man to regulate his hours and amount of rest by his desires is just as preposterous as for an unhealthy man to rule his appetites by his sensations. Remain apart from Christ, and then you are under the law; the fourth commandment is as necessary for you as for the Israelites.

28.

THE SABBATH A LAW NOW.

REMEMBER the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.—Exod. xx, 8.

TO recklessly loosen the hold of a nation on the sanctity of the Lord's Day would be most mischievous—to do so willfully would be an act almost diabolical.

Had this law been given in all its purity to the Jews, instead of turning every week day into a Sabbath they would have transformed every Sabbath into a week day. . . . Therefore a law was given, specializing a day, in order to lead them to the broader truth that every day is God's. Now so far as we are in the Jewish state the fourth commandment, even in its rigor and strictness, is wisely used by us; nay, we might say indispensable. For

who is he who needs not this day? . . . He who can dispense with it must be holy and spiritual indeed. And he who, still unholy and unspiritual, would yet dispense with it, is a man who would fain be wiser than his Maker.

29.

THE SABBATH NECESSARY NOW.

THE Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.—Mark ii, 27, 28.

THERE is in the Sabbath a substance, a permanent something—"a body"—which cannot pass away. "The body is of Christ;" the spirit of Christ is the fulfillment of the law. To have the spirit of Christ is to have fulfilled the law. Let us hear the mind of Christ in this matter, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." . . . The religionists of that day maintained that the necessities of man's nature must give way to the rigor of the enactment. He taught that the enactment must yield to man's necessities. They said the Sabbath was written in the book of the law; He said that it was written on man's nature.

Even in the contrivance of one day in seven, it was arranged by unerring wisdom. Just because the Sabbath was made for man, and not because man was ordained to keep the Sabbath day, you cannot tamper even with the iota, one day in seven. If you would sanctify all time, you set apart a Sabbath—not to show that other days are not intended to be sacred, but for the purpose of making them sacred.

30.

THE PURITAN SABBATH.

IF thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day ; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable ; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words : then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord ; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father : for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.—Isa. lviii, 13, 14.

I BELIEVE the stern rigor of the Puritan Sabbath had a grand effect upon the soul. Fancy a man thrown in upon himself with no permitted music, nor relaxation, nor literature, nor secular conversation—nothing but his Bible, his own soul, and God's silence ! What

hearts of iron this system must have made. . . . I am persuaded, however, that the Sabbath must rest not on an enactment, but on the necessities of human nature. It is necessary not because it is commanded, but it is commanded because it is necessary.

31.

THE SABBATH OF ETERNITY.

THERE remaineth therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.—Heb. iv, 9. [Rev. Ver.]

IT is only when all the rest of our human nature is calmed that the spirit comes forth in full energy; all the rest tires, the spirit never tires. Humbleness, awe, adoration, love, these, have in them no weariness; so that when this frame shall be dissolved into the dust of the earth, and the mind which is merely fitted for this time world, learning by experience, shall have been superseded there, the spirit will enter upon that Sabbath of which all earthly Sabbaths are but the shadow—the Sabbath of eternity.

APRIL.

DAILY THOUGHTS.



	APRIL.
The Confessional.....	I
The Mass.....	2
The Bible.....	3
God's Revelation.....	4
The Simplicity of the Gospel.....	5
Bible Promises.....	6
Bible Threatenings.....	7
Joseph, Moses, David, Isaiah.....	8
Pharaoh, Balaam, Eli, Saul.....	9
Mary, John, James, Peter.....	10
Judas, Pilate.....	11
Paul.....	12
The Physician.....	13
The Minister's Fitness for Work.....	14
A Minister's Success.....	15
The Fate of a Sermon.....	16
Vain Preaching.....	17
Preaching Christ.....	18
Time.....	19
The Backward Look.....	20
The Forward Look.....	21
Our Race.....	22
Language.....	23
Society.....	24
Socialism.....	25
Mob Force.....	26
The Evil of Party Spirit.....	27
Liberty and Independence.....	28
Superstition.....	29
Idolatry.....	30

1.

THE CONFSSIONAL.

Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure.—Ezra x, 11.

THE confessional, even through its mass of evil, proclaims to us the truth that through the light of Christ there has come into the world the necessity for a pure conscience.

2.

THE MASS.

IF one died for all, then were all dead : and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.—2 Cor. v, 14, 15.

ROME asserts that in the mass a true and proper sacrifice is offered up for the sins of all—that the offering of Christ is forever repeated. To this Protestantism has objected vehemently that there is but one offering once offered—an objection in itself entirely true—yet the Romish doctrine contains a truth which it is of importance to disengage from the gross and material form with which it has been overlaid. . . . In one sense it is true to say that there is one offering once offered *for* all. But it is equally true to say that one offering is

valueless, except so far as it is completed and repeated in the life and self-offering *of* all. This is the Christian's sacrifice. Not mechanically completed in the miserable materialism of the mass, but spiritually in the life of all in whom the Crucified lives.

The sacrifice of Christ is done over again in every life which is lived not to self, but to God.

3.

THE BIBLE.

AND beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.—Luke xxiv, 27.

THIS collection of books has been to the world what no other book has ever been to a nation. States have been founded on its principles. Kings rule by a compact based on it. Men hold the Bible in their hands when preparing to give solemn evidence affecting life, death, or property; the battleship goes into action with one on board whose office is to expound it; its prayers, its psalms, are language which we use when we speak to God; eighteen centuries have found no holier, no diviner language. If ever there has been a prayer or a hymn enshrined in the heart of a

nation you are sure to find its bases in the Bible. There is no new religious idea given to the world, but it is merely the development of something given in the Bible. The very translations of it have fixed language and settled the idioms of speech. Germany and England speak as they speak because the Bible was translated. It has made the most illiterate peasant more familiar with history, customs, and geography of ancient Palestine than with the localities of his own country. This word of God has held a thousand nations for thrice a thousand years; held them by an abiding power.

4.

GOD'S REVELATION.

THE natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. —I Cor. ii, 14.

THE leaders in the world of literature are qualified to pronounce on a point of taste; the counselors of this world to weigh an amount of evidence. But in matters spiritual they were as unfit to judge as a man without ear is to decide respecting harmony. The world, to sense seems stationary. To the eye of reason it moves with lightning speed. The judgment

of the senses is worth nothing in such matters. For every kind of truth a special capacity or preparation is indispensable.

For a revelation of spiritual facts two things are needed: First a divine truth; next, a spirit which can receive it. Therefore, the apostle's whole defense resolved itself into this: The world by wisdom knew not God. And his vindication of his teaching was: Those revealed truths cannot be seen by the eye, heard by the ear, nor guessed by the heart; they are visible, audible, imaginable, only to the spirit. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." By the spiritually prepared, they are recognized as beautiful, though they be folly to all the world besides.

5.

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE GOSPEL.

BUT I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.—2 Cor. xi, 3.

PEOPLE suppose simplicity of the Gospel means what a child or a plowman can understand. Now if this be simplicity, evidently

the simplicity of the Gospel was corrupted by Paul himself, for he is not simple. Who understands his deep writings? Does one in a thousand? Peter says there are things hard to understand in Paul's epistles. . . . "Simple" means, according to Paul, unmixed or unadulterated.

6.

BIBLE PROMISES.

WHEREBY are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.—2 Peter i, 4.

THE Scripture deals with principles; not with individuals, but rather with states of humanity. Promises and threatenings are made to individuals because they are in a particular state of character, but they belong to all who are in that state, for "God is no respecter of persons." The whole argument in the Epistle to the Romans is that the promises made to Abraham were not to his person, but to his faith; and thus the apostle says, "They who are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham." . . . Promises belong to persons only so far as they are what they are taken to be; and consequently all unlimited promises made to individuals, so far as they are referred merely to those individuals,

are necessarily exaggerated and hyperbolic. They can only be true of One in whom that is fulfilled which was unfulfilled in them.

7.

BIBLE THREATENINGS.

ARISE, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.—Jonah i, 2.

JONAH, by divine command, went through Nineveh proclaiming its destruction; but the prophecy belonged to the state in which Nineveh was: it was true only while it remained in that state; and therefore, as they repented, and their state was thus changed, the prophecy was left unfulfilled.

8.

JOSEPH, MOSES, DAVID, ISAIAH.

I HAVE found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will.—Acts xiii, 22.

“FEAR ye not; I will nourish you and your little ones.” This is the Christian spirit, before the Christian times. Christ was in Joseph’s heart, though not definitely in Joseph’s creed. The eternal Word whispered in the souls of men before it spoke articulately aloud in the incarnation.

Moses was mentally great, morally good ; but, besides, Moses was religious. This is shown in his reverence, . . . in his obedience, . . . in his meekness.

The character of David is a life of eminent saintliness, but you cannot mistake the Jew. There is Jewish exclusiveness, Jewish faults, Jewish narrowness. David is scarcely a personage, so entirely does he pass in Jewish forms of thought into an ideal sovereign—"the sure mercies of David."

Isaiah went somewhat minutely into the expenditures of the Jewish ladies on their pretty persons while the cause of the widow and fatherless were uncared for ; but they laughed at him until he became importunate, and then poor Isaiah was sawn in two and he bothered them no longer about their "chains" and their "bracelets," their "glasses," the "fine linens," the "hoods," and the "veils."

9.

PHARAOH, BALAAM, ELI, SAUL.

AND the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he harkened not unto them.—Exod. ix, 12.

WE find it written that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. It is the greatest evil and worst penalty of doing wrong, that at

last a man ceases to distinguish right from wrong.

Balaam saw his duty clear at night, but the next day he looked again and saw the glittering bribe. He could not be sure ; at last he thought God's voice said, Go. No bribe on earth could induce Balaam to say a falsehood. . . . And yet with all this there is utter truthlessness of heart. . . . He will only speak the thing he feels, but he is not careful to feel all that is true. He goes to another place where the whole truth will not force itself upon his mind. . . . There is many a dishonorable thing done in business, or at an election, and the principal takes care not to inquire.

Samuel alone, in all Israel, crossed Eli's path. And yet he stood the test. He was unswervingly just. He threw no petty hindrances in his way. . . . Free from envy, free from priest-craft, earnest, humble, submissive—that is the bright side of Eli's character. There is another side to Eli's character. He was a wavering, feeble, powerless man, with excellent intentions, but an utter want of *will*.

Saul, the first King of Israel, whose earlier career was so bright and glorious, . . . Defeat

and misfortune gradually soured his temper, and made him bitter and cruel. Jealousy passed into disobedience, and insanity into suicide.

10.

MARY, JOHN, JAMES, PETER.

THERE was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.—John xiii, 23.

MARTHA found her life in the outer world of fact; Mary, in the inner world of feeling. Martha expressed herself outwardly in word, in action, in small acts of attention; she loved to discuss. . . . Mary did not express—felt herself inexpressible; reached truth by the heart, not by the mind.

Why was John the most beloved? John was lovable. Not talent, as in Paul's case, nor eloquence, nor amiability drew Christ's spirit to him, but that large heart, which enabled him to believe because he felt, and hence to reveal that "God is love." . . . He is most dear to the heart of Christ, who loves most, because he has most of God in him.

It was the office of James to assert the necessity of moral rectitude. . . . If you read through his whole epistle, you will find it is, from first to last, one continued vindication of

the first principles of morality against the *semblances* of religion. It is well known that Luther complained of this epistle that it did not contain the Gospel. . . . The Gospel! how can we speak of the Gospel, when the first principles of *morality* are forgotten? when Christians are excusing themselves, and slandering one another? How can the superstructure of love and faith be built, when the very foundations of human character—justice, mercy, truth—have not been laid?

Peter was remarkable for personal courage. A soldier by nature, frank, free, generous, irascible. In his writings, accordingly, we find a great deal said about martyrdom.

11.

JUDAS. PILATE.

AND being let go, they went to their own company.
—Acts iv, 23.

I AM said to have “apologized for Judas.” My “apology” for Judas consisted in saying that his sin was not murder, but unbelief, and that he was sincere in what he did; also that his temptation was Satanic, and that he is in hell. I did not say Judas was sincere in his betrayal of Christ, nor in his steward-

ship of the common purse—I did not say that he was a sincere man. I simply said he was sincere in his remorse. . . . The suicide of Judas was the act of a man sincere, even to agony, in his remorse. . . . But remorse is not penitence.

“What is truth?” . . . It was not a question put for the sake of information, for he went immediately out, and did not stay for information. It was not put for the sake of ridicule, for he went out to say, “I find no fault in him.” Sarcasm there was perhaps, but it was that mournful, bitter sarcasm which hides inward unrest in sneering words.

12.

PAUL.

I HAVE fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.—2 Tim. iv, 7.

A HEART, a brain, and a soul of fire; all his life a suppressed volcano; his acts “living things with hands and feet;” his words half battles. A man, consequently, of terrible inward conflicts; his soul a battlefield for heaven and hell. Read, for example, the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans describing his struggle under the law. It was by faith that

Paul removed mountains of impossibilities; it was by love that he became like God. Paul was a man of keen intellect, and of soaring and aspiring thought which would endure no shackles on its freedom. And his writings are full of the two subjects we might have expected from this temperament. He speaks a great deal of intellectual gifts; very much of Christian liberty.

13.

THE PHYSICIAN.

WHEN Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.—Matt. ix, 12.

THE minister's work is spiritual, the physician's temporal. But if the former neglected physical needs or the latter shrank from spiritual opportunities on the plea that the cure of bodies, not of souls, is his work, so far they refuse to imitate their Master.

14.

THE MINISTER'S FITNESS FOR WORK.

IF thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ.—1 Tim. iv, 6.

I THINK the strictness of self-examination for ministerial fitness is contained in that solemn, searching question of our Lord, thrice

repeated, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" It is not a minister's wisdom, but his *conviction*, which imparts itself to others. Nothing gives life but life. Real flame alone kindles other flame. This was the power of the apostles. "We believe, and therefore speak." Firm faith in what they spoke, that was the basis of the apostles' strength; but in us there is one thing wanting—we only *half* believe.

15.

A MINISTER'S SUCCESS.

WHO also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.—2 Cor. iii, 6.

WHAT is ministerial success? Crowded churches—full aisles—attentive congregations—approval of the religious world—much impression produced? Elijah thought so, and when he found out his mistake, and discovered that the applause on Carmel subsided into hideous stillness, his heart well-nigh broke with disappointment. Ministerial success lies in altered lives and obedient, humble hearts; unseen work recognized in the judgment day.

Paul details the circumstances of his own rare ministry, and he asks in return not the affection of the Corinthians, nor their admiration, but this : that they “ receive not the grace of God in vain.”

16.

THE FATE OF A SERMON.

HE that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it ; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.—Matt. xiii, 23.

SCARCELY has its [a sermon's] last tone vibrated on the ear, when a fresh impression is given by the music which dismisses the congregation. That is succeeded by another impression, as your friend puts his arm in yours and talks of some other matter, irrelevant, obliterating any slight seriousness which the sermon produced. Another, and another, and another—and the word is *trod-den down*.

Again, it can be left to itself safely. It will grow. Ministers need not torment themselves about the issue of their work, for God gives the increase. It can be left, for it is God in the soul. When once the farmer has sown, he can do little more except weed.

17.

VAIN PREACHING.

IF any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.—1 Cor. iii, 15.

MANY a minister, who prides himself on the number of his listeners, will be stripped of his vainglory, if the characters which he has produced be found wanting, if that which seems to be souls won for Christ turns out to be only hearts won for self. . . . Sincerity does not verify doctrines, but it saves the man. "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord," says Paul, "we persuade men." Striking words! Not "we terrify," not "we threaten," but "we persuade."

18.

PREACHING CHRIST.

FOR I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.—1 Cor. ii, 2.

IF I say that Newton is taught in our universities, I mean his doctrines are taught; and to preach Christ crucified is to preach his doctrines. . . . Preaching Christ implies preaching truth in connection with a *person*; it is not merely purity, but the pure One; not

merely goodness, but the good One, that we worship. . . . Lastly, to preach Christ is to preach the doctrine of surrender to the will of God.

Paul's work at Athens was a failure. . . . There was no church at Athens. He came to Corinth and preached no longer to the wise, the learned, or the rich. . . . Paul no longer confronted the philosopher on his own ground. . . . Not the crucifixion of Christ, but Christ and Christ crucified. Christ his own evidence. We know the result: the church of Corinth, the largest and noblest harvest ever given to ministerial toil.

19.

TIME.

AND the angel . . . lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.—Rev. x, 5, 6.

WHEN God created the sun and moon and stars to serve for "signs and for seasons, and for days and years," he was actually, so far as man was concerned, creating time. Our minds would be only floating in

an eternal Now, if it were not for symbolical successions which represent the processes of thought. The clock in the house is almost a fresh creation. The gliding heavens, and the seasons, and the ticking clock—what is time to us without them? Nothing.

20.

THE BACKWARD LOOK.

LORD, when saw we thee a hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.—Matt. xxv, 44, 45.

YESTERDAY was such a day as never was before, and never can be again. Out of darkness and eternity it was born, a new, fresh day; into darkness and eternity it sank again forever. It had a voice calling to us, of its own. Its own work—its own duties. What were we doing yesterday?

Take yesterday as a specimen of life. What was it with most of us? A day of sin. Was it sin palpable and dark, such as we shall remember painfully this day year? Nay, my brethren, unkindness, petulance, wasted time,

opportunities lost, frivolous conversation, that was our chief guilt. And yet with all that, trifling as it may be, when it comes to be the history of life does it not leave behind a restless sense of fault, a vague idea of debt?

21.

THE FORWARD LOOK.

THIS one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—Phil. iii, 13, 14.

TIME past is a dream, time to come seems immense ; the longest night, which seemed as if it would never drag through, is but a speck of memory when it is gone.

Look forward but ten years, and plan for it, live for it ; there is something of manhood, something of courage, required to conquer the thousand little things that stand in your way. And therefore it is, that faith, and nothing but faith, gives victory in death. We are conquerors of death when we are able to look beyond it.

The habit of looking forward to the future prevents all pride and self-righteousness, and makes our best and only rest and satisfaction

to consist in contemplating the future which is bringing us nearer and nearer home.

22.

OUR RACE.

HE hath done all things well.—Mark vii, 37.

THE only question we ask is this, whether God is guiding the race or not. If he guides it, then it is on its way to good and not to evil.

23.

LANGUAGE.

WHETHER there be tongues, they shall cease.—I Cor. xiii, 8.

THE expert linguist is generally found more proud of his gifts, and more vain, than the deep thinker and knower. And yet suppose a man had known fifty languages in the days of Paul, how many—or rather how few—would be of use now?

24.

SOCIETY.

WE then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.—Rom. xv, 1.

THE advent of better times for the working classes depends on their own personal reformation, chastity, sobriety, and self-con-

trol. . . . The law of life is this : no man can be good or great or happy except through inward efforts of his own, sustained by faith and strengthened by the grace of God.

25.

SOCIALISM.

OTHER foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ.—I Cor. iii, 11.

SOCIALISM proceeds on the principle that all moral and even physical evil arises from unjust laws. If the cause be remedied, the effect will be good. But Christianity throws aside all that as merely chimerical. It proves that the fault is not in outward circumstances, but in ourselves. Christianity leaves all outward circumstances to ameliorate themselves, fastens its attention on the spirit which has to deal with them. Christ has declared that the kingdom of heaven is from within.

The world has no remedy for its miseries but the cure of its selfishness. The coming revelation can only be a development of the last, as Christianity was of Judaism. There can be no new revelation.

26.

MOB FORCE.

THEY cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him.—John xix, 15.

THE enmity of the upper classes is impotent ; but when that cry of brute force is stirred from the deeps of society, as deaf to the voice of reason as the ocean in its strength churned into raving foam by the winds, the heart of mere earthly oak quails before that.

Never yet did a nation perish from without, but by a decay from within. The moral ruin preceded the violent outward one.

27.

THE EVIL OF PARTY SPIRIT.

A NEW commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.—John xiii, 34.

NOTHING more certainly eats out the heart and life of religion than party spirit. Christianity is love ; party spirit is the death of love. Christianity is union amid variety of views ; party spirit is disunion. . . . Accuracy of view is worth little in comparison with warmth of heart. It is easy to love such as agree with us. Let us learn to love those who differ from us.

28.

LIBERTY AND INDEPENDENCE.

SUBMIT yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.—I Peter ii, 13.

LIBERTY is one thing, independence another; a man is free, politically, whose rightful energies are not cramped by the selfish, unjust claims of another. A man is independent, politically, when he is free from every tie that binds man to man. One is national blessedness, the other is national anarchy. Liberty makes you loyal to the grand law, "I ought;" independence puts you in a position to obey the evil law, "I will." Every Christian ought to be a free man, but no Christian is or ought to be independent.

People talk of liberty as if it meant the liberty of doing what a man *likes*. The only liberty that a man worthy the name of a man ought to ask for, is to have all restrictions, inward and outward, removed which prevent his doing what he ought.

29.

SUPERSTITION.

THEN Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.—Acts xvii, 22,

THIS I believe is the very essence of superstition—to feel great reverence for certain objects, visible or invisible, on account of some mysterious influence which all the while has not necessarily any moral effect, or any connection with character. Superstition has no religious element in it at all. It is all cowardice.

30.

IDOLATRY.

LITTLE children, keep yourselves from idols.—I John v, 21.

IDOLATRY is the worship of anything as the Highest which is not the highest—the admission of any conception of God which is either false or else unnecessarily inadequate.

QAY.

DAILY THOUGHTS.

	MAY.
Atheism.....	1
Worldliness.....	2
Morality.....	3
The Opinion of Others.....	4
Maxims and Principles.....	5
Riches.....	6
Fashionable Society.....	7
Extravagance.....	8
Taste.....	9
Art.....	10
Sculpture.....	11
Beauty Should Elevate.....	12
Good Books.....	13
Read Few Books.....	14
To Read With Profit.....	15
Happiness and Blessedness.....	16
The Cost of Pleasure.....	17
The Capacity of Enjoyment.....	18
God's Pleasures.....	19
Amusements.....	20
Sowing and Reaping.....	21
Sin.....	22
Transgression.....	23
A Personal Devil.....	24
Tempted of the Devil.....	25
Origin of Evil.....	26
The Fall of Man.....	27
Predestination.....	28
The First Time You Sinned.....	29
Leaven.....	30
One Fault Leads unto Another.....	31

1.

ATHEISM.

THE wicked . . . will not seek after God : God is not in all his thoughts.—Psalm x, 4.

IF you wish to know what hollowness and heartlessness are, you must seek for them in the world of light, elegant, superficial fashion—where frivolity has turned the heart into a rock bed of selfishness. Say what you will of the heartlessness of trade, it is nothing compared with the heartlessness of fashion. Say what they will of the atheism of science, it is nothing to the atheism of that round of pleasure in which many a heart lives—dead while it lives.

2.

WORLDLINESS.

LOOKING diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God ; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, . . . as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected.—Heb. xii, 15, 16, 17.

WORLDLINESS is the attractive power of something present, in opposition to something to come. In this respect worldliness is the spirit of childhood carried into

manhood. The child lives in the present hour—to-day to him is everything. The holiday promised at a distant interval is no holiday at all—it must be either now or never. Natural in the child, and therefore pardonable, this spirit, when carried on into manhood, is coarse—is worldliness.

3.

MORALITY.

EXCEPT your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. v, 20.

MORALITY requires that an act be done on principle. Religion goes deeper, and inquires into the state of the heart. In morals we only believe so far as we are.

When man comes to front the everlasting God, and look the splendor of his judgments in the face, personal integrity, the dream of spotlessness and innocence vanish into thin air.

4.

THE OPINION OF OTHERS.

IF meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.—I Cor. viii, 13.

WE cannot live in this world indifferent to appearances. Year by year we are more and more taught this truth. It is irksome, no

doubt, to be under restraint; to have to ask not only, "Does God permit this?" but, "Will it not be misconstrued by others?" and to a free, open, fiery spirit, such as the apostle of the Gentiles, doubly irksome and almost intolerable. Nevertheless, it was to him a most solemn consideration.

5.

MAXIMS AND PRINCIPLES.

AND all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.—Luke iv, 22.

A MAN who is governed, not by principles, but by maxims and rules, is a pedant or a slave; he will never be able to depart from the letter of the rule, not even to preserve the spirit of it. Here is the difference between the law and the Gospel. The law lays down rules—"Do this and live." The Gospel lays down principles. Thus Judaism said, "Forgive seven times;" Christianity said, "Forgiveness is a boundless spirit."

6.

RICHES.

WHAT shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?—Mark viii, 36.

CHRIST said, "How hardly shall they that *trust* in riches enter into the kingdom of heaven." He does not say the divided

heart has no religion, but that it is a dwarfed, stunted, feeble religion. Many such a Christian do you find among the rich and the titled, who as a less encumbered man might have been a resolute soldier of the cross; but he is only now a realization of the old pagan fable—a spiritual giant buried under a mountain of gold.

7.

FASHIONABLE SOCIETY.

THEY that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.—Gal. v, 24.

THEY who know the world of fashion tell us that the tone adopted there is either to be, or to affect to be, sated with enjoyment, to be proof against surprises, to have lost all keenness of enjoyment, and to have all keenness of wonder gone. That which ought to be man's shame becomes their boast—unsusceptibility of any fresh emotion.

8.

EXTRAVAGANCE.

IF therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?—Luke xvi, 11.

I WASTED my time in trying to explain to her that expenditure is not production; that £50,000 a year spent is not £50,000 worth of

commodities produced, and added nothing to the real wealth of the country. I tried to show her that twenty servants are not supported by their master, but by the laborers who raise their corn and make their clothes. Employment does not create anything. Men engaged in carrying dishes or in making useless roads are employed no doubt. . . . It may make a fairer distribution of the wealth in the country, but does not go one step toward altering the real burden of the country, or producing new wealth. Extravagant expenditure impoverishes the country.

9.

TASTE.

CONSIDER the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.—Matt. vi, 28, 29.

TASTE is perception of beauty ; to have taste is to recognize that which is right and congruous. When we speak of the moral sense, we mean the power of distinguishing between right and wrong ; when we speak of taste, we mean the faculty of distinguishing that which is fitting from that which is unbecoming. . . . What is it that prevents sympathy between class and class? Not merely differ-

ence of opinion, but difference of taste. The difference in feeling between educated and uneducated men places a great gulf between them.

Enlarge your tastes, that you may enlarge your hearts as well as your pleasures; feel all that is beautiful, love all that is good.

10.

ART.

HE removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it.—2 Kings xviii, 4.

I AM very anxious to humanize and polish the people; but I cannot shut my eyes to the lesson of history, that the arts, such as painting, sculpture, music, poetry, have not in themselves ennobled, but often deteriorated nations. The worship of the beautiful is not the worship of holiness; and therefore to talk of statue galleries and museums as if they were to do the work which can only be done by the cross of Christ, and to represent such æsthetic amusements as the true and right *religious* use of rest, I hold is mere false sentimentality.

11.

SCULPTURE.

THOU shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.—Exod. xx, 4, 5.

For this ye know, that no . . . covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.—Eph. v, 5.

ONE thing that has made me reflect much has been the effect produced by sculpture on the Greeks. Those sublime works, of which fragments are to us like inspiration, were by the judgment of heathens themselves productive of a corruption of feelings and morals that is scarcely credible. I thank God that we have not the treasures of Italy or the Continent. . . . And it is very singular to find how all the nobler heathen condemned the stage and the dance and the poetry which answers to our romance—such men as Plutarch, Cato, Socrates, etc. One very impassioned passage in Plato I remember struck me when a boy, where he banishes all such things from his ideal republic.

12.

BEAUTY SHOULD ELEVATE.

LET the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us : and establish thou the work of our hands upon us ; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.—Psalm xc, 17.

THE true objective of that sense is moral beauty. . . . No man knows the highest goodness who does not feel beauty. The beauty of holiness is its highest aspect. To act right because it is beautiful, and because noble, true, self-denying, pure acts commend themselves to a soul attuned to harmony, is the highest kind of goodness. "To see the King in his beauty" is the loftiest and most unearthly attainment.

13.

GOOD BOOKS.

FROM a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.—2 Tim. iii, 15.

I PERCEIVE more than ever the necessity of devotional reading. I mean the works of eminently holy persons, whose tone was not merely uprightness of character and high-mindedness, but communion—a strong sense of personal and everliving communion—with God besides.

14.

READ FEW BOOKS.

THIS book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth ; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.—Josh. i, 8.

GIRLS read too much and think too little. I will answer for it that there are few girls of eighteen who have not read more books than I have ; and as to religious books I could count upon my fingers in two minutes all I ever read—but they are mine. . . . Multifarious reading weakens the mind more than doing nothing ; it is an excuse for the mind to lie dormant, while thought is poured in and runs through a clear stream, over unproductive gravel, on which not even mosses grow.

15.

TO READ WITH PROFIT.

PHILIP ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest ? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me ?—Acts viii, 30, 31.

IT is very surprising to find how little we retain of a book. . . . Books read once have passed as completely from us as if we

had never read them ; whereas the discipline of mind got by writing down, not copying, an abstract of a book which is worth the trouble, fixes it on the mind for years ; and, besides, enables one to read other books with more attention and more profit.

16.

HAPPINESS AND BLESSEDNESS.

BLESSED is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.—Psalm i, 1.

HE drew the distinction sharply between happiness and blessedness—the two things are opposite although not necessarily contrary. He told them, “Blessed are the meek ! Blessed are the poor in spirit !” The mourning man, and the poor man, and the persecuted man—these were not happy, if happiness consists in the gratification of all our desires, but they were blessed beyond all earthly blessedness ; for . . . blessedness is the satisfaction of those aspirations which have God alone for their end and aim.

17.

THE COST OF PLEASURE.

AND he said, I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.—Luke xii, 19, 20.

BEFORE you covet the enjoyment which another possesses you must first calculate the cost at which it was procured.

In the life of pleasure we lead the life of excitement, and thus it soon follows that emotions will not rise at the call and bidding of excitement; the history being inevitably this: first sensibility of feeling, then excitement, then callousness, then apathy, and lastly hardness.

18.

THE CAPACITY OF ENJOYMENT.

AS it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.—2 Cor. viii, 15.

GOD has given to every man a certain capacity and a certain power of enjoyment. Beyond that he cannot find delight. Whatsoever he heaps or hoards beyond that is not enjoyment, but disquiet.

Every man must go out of himself for enjoyment. There is that within us which compels

us to attach ourselves to something outward. The choice is not this: love or be without love. You cannot give the pent up steam its choice of moving or not moving. It must move one way or the other, the right way or the wrong way. Direct it rightly, and its energy rolls the engine wheels smoothly on their track; block up its passage, and it bounds away a thing of madness and ruin. Stop it you cannot; it will rather burst. So it is with our hearts.

19.

GOD'S PLEASURES.

HE maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.—Matt. v, 45.

ALL God's pleasures are simple ones; health, the rapture of a May morning, sunshine, the stream blue and green, kind words, benevolent acts, the glow of good humor.

20.

AMUSEMENTS.

LOVE not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.—I John ii, 15.

IF the enjoyments which you permit yourselves are such that the thought of passing Time and coming Eternity presents itself as an

intrusive thought, which has no business there, which is out of place and incongruous; if there is left behind a craving for excitement which can only be slacked by more and more intense excitement; then it is at your own peril that you say, "All is left open to me, and permitted." Unworldly you *must* become—or die. Dare not to say, "This is only a matter of opinion;" it is *not* a matter of opinion. . . . Remember, that worldliness is a more decisive test of a man's spiritual state than even sin. Sin may be sudden, the result of temptation, without premeditation, yet afterward hated—repented of—repudiated—forsaken. But if a man *be at home* in the world's pleasures and pursuits, contented . . . if they could but last forever, is not his state, genealogy, and character clearly stamped?

21.

SOWING AND REAPING.

BE not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.—Gal. vi, 7.

THE "flesh" includes all the desires of our unrenewed nature—the harmless as well as the sinful. Any labor, therefore, which is bounded by present well-being is *sowing* to the

flesh. . . . This is the mistake men make. They expect both harvests, paying only one price. They would be blessed with goodness and prosperity at once. They would have that on which they bestowed no labor. . . . If you sow the wind, do not complain if your harvest is the whirlwind. If you sow to the Spirit, be content with a spiritual reward—invisible, within.

22.

SIN.

BE ye angry, and sin not.—Eph. iv, 26.

IN every act of sin there are two distinct steps: There is the rising of a desire which is natural, and being natural, is not wrong; there is the indulgence of that desire in forbidden circumstances, and that is sin. . . . Resentment is but the sense of injustice made more vivid by its being brought home to ourselves; resentment is beyond our control, so far. There is no sin in this: but let resentment rest there; let it pass into, not justice, but revenge; let it smolder in vindictive feeling till it becomes retaliation, and then a natural feeling has grown into a transgression. Guilt is contracted by the soul in so far as it sins against and transgresses the law of God,

by doing that which it believed to be wrong ; not so much what *is* wrong as what *appears* to *it* to be wrong. This is the doctrine distinctly laid down in the seventh and eighth verses of First Corinthians, eighth chapter.

23.

TRANSGRESSION.

SIN is the transgression of the law.—1 John iii, 4.

EVERY sin is a transgression of the law, but every transgression of the law is not necessarily a sin. . . . It is possible for a man to transgress the law of God not knowingly, and in inspired language we are told that “sin is not imputed unto him.” . . . There must be some voluntary act, transgressing some known law, or there is no sin.

24.

A PERSONAL DEVIL.

THEN saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.—Matt. iv, 10.

OUR salvation does not depend upon our having right notions about the devil, but right feelings about God. If you hate evil, you are on God’s side, whether there be a personal

evil principle or not. I myself believe there is, but not so unquestionably as to be able to say I think it a matter of clear revelation. The Bible *does* reveal God, and except with a belief in God there can be no goodness. But I can conceive intense hatred of wrong with great uncertainty whether there be a personal devil or not. Indeed many persons who believe in a devil are worse instead of better for their belief, since they throw the responsibility of their acts off themselves on him. Do not torment yourself with such questions. The simpler ones are the deepest.

25.

TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL.

AND the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat : but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.—Luke xxii, 31, 32.

WHAT is it to renounce the devil? *His* works are sins of our higher nature, spiritual offenses—such as envy, pride, anger, malice. The *solitary* sins are those of the *flesh* and of the *devil*. . . . We are most ashamed of our meaner sensual sins—gluttony, etc. When we yield to them we sink

to a level with the brute, but when we yield to the sins of our *higher* nature we are then on our way to become *devils*.

26.

ORIGIN OF EVIL.

LET no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God : for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man : but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.—James i, 13, 14.

“GOD can do anything?” I know not that. God cannot deny himself ; God cannot do wrong ; God cannot create a number less than one ; God cannot make a contradiction true. It is a contradiction to let man be free, and force him to do right. . . . Without free will there could be no human goodness. It is wise, therefore, and good in God, to give birth to free will. But once acknowledge free will in man, and the origin of evil does not lie in God. . . . In our own free will—in the grand and fearful power we have to ruin ourselves—lies the real and only religious solution of the mystery. In the soil of the heart is found all the nutriment of spiritual life, and all the nutriment of the weeds and poisons which destroy spiritual life.

27.

THE FALL OF MAN.

SINCE by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.—I Cor. xv, 21, 22.

WHEN man fell, the world fell with him. All creation received a shock. Thorns, briars, and thistles, sprang up. They were there before, but to the now restless and impatient hands of men they became obstacles and weeds. Death, which must ever have existed as a form of dissolution, a passing from one state to another, became a curse; the sting of death was sin—unchanged in itself, it changed in man.

28.

PREDESTINATION.

WHOM he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.—Rom. viii, 30.

ALL high truth is the union of two contradictions. Thus predestination and free will are opposites: and the truth does not lie between these two, but in a higher reconciling truth which leaves both true.

Paul does not mean to assert the doctrine of an arbitrary election or predestination; on

the contrary, he says that this calling was in respect of inward fitness, "believing," and not of outward advantages. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." God prepares the heart of man for the reception of the Gospel—that is God's blessed plan of election.

29.

THE FIRST TIME YOU SINNED.

MY sin is ever before me.—Psalm li, 3.

LET anyone, out of a series of transgressions, compare the character of the first and the last. The first time there was the shudder and the horror, and the violent struggle and the feeling of impossibility. I cannot—*cannot* do this. The second time there was faint reluctance, . . . and the last time there is neither shudder nor reluctance, but the eager plunge down the precipice on the brink of which he trembled once.

30.

LEAVEN.

KNOW ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.—I Cor. v, 6.

SIN committed with impunity corrupts the body of men to which the sinner belongs.

31.

ONE FAULT LEADS UNTO ANOTHER.

THIS he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief.—John xii, 6.

THE worst misfortune that can happen is to sin and to escape detection; shame and sorrow do God's work, as nothing else can do it. . . . A sin undetected is the soil out of which fresh sin will grow.

JUNE.

DAILY THOUGHTS.

	JUNE.
Backsliding.....	1
Can We Fall From Grace?.....	2
Idleness.....	3
Sins of Thought.....	4
Unbelief.....	5
Contented to Doubt.....	6
The Sin of Sins.....	7
Infidelity.....	8
Our Lips.....	9
The Evil of Slander.....	10
The Remedy for Slander.....	11
The Unpardonable Sin.....	12
Passion Never Reasons.....	13
Sarcasm.....	14
Our Judgment.....	15
Judging.....	16
Praise.....	17
Pride.....	18
Vanity.....	19
Boasting.....	20
Hypocrisy.....	21
Insincerity.....	22
Hatred.....	23
Wickedness.....	24
Curses.....	25
Agony of Sin.....	26
The Soul Degraded.....	27
A Hardened Heart.....	28
The Deepest Curse of Sin.....	29
The Strength of Sin.....	30

1.

BACKSLIDING.

LET him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.—I Cor. x, 12.

KNOW we not how awfully true that sentence is, "Sin revived, and I died?" The vivid life of sin is the death of the man. Have we never felt that our true existence has absolutely in that moment disappeared, and that *we* are not?

2.

CAN WE FALL FROM GRACE?

EVERY branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.—John xv, 2.

B*Y* *grace* some meant the Spirit of God, and they [Corinthians] held that the soul which had once become one with God is his forever. Undoubtedly this has the sanction of Scripture. For example, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." We cannot read these passages without perceiving that there is an inner circle of men in the kingdom of grace in whom God's Spirit dwells, who are

one with God, in whom his Holy Spirit is a well of water springing up into everlasting life. On the other hand, by *grace* some meant that state in which all Christians are—as redeemed from the world by Christ's blood, called to be saints, and to whom the high privileges of God's Church are revealed. Unquestionably not all who are recipients of that grace and redeemed into that mercy will be saved. Remember the parable of the fig tree in the vineyard, which was unfruitful, and was sentenced. Again such exhortations as "Quench not the Spirit," implies that he may be quenched. These passages prove at least that there are also those who have professed religion with warmth—nay, who in Christ's name have done many wonderful works—and yet to whom he shall declare at the last, "I never knew you." So near may we approach to the kingdom of God, and yet come short of attaining it.

3.

IDLENESS.

BUT I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.—Matt. xii, 36.

WOE and trial to the spirit that has nothing *for the hands* to do! Misery to him or her who emancipates himself or herself

from the universal law, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." Evil thoughts, despondency, sensual feeling, sin in every shape is before him, to beset and madden, often to ruin him.

4.

SINS OF THOUGHT.

LET the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.—Psalm xix, 14.

THERE is the parable of the son who said to his father, "I go not," and afterward went. The resolve of disobedience was made. Do we fancy that it was not in any way reversed or canceled by the change of purpose? The comment of Christ is that he [the son] did the will of his father. There is no passage in which it is said that sin of thought is equal to the sin of act. It is simply said the sin of act may be done in thought, so far as thought goes. Whether it is equivalent to an act depends upon the question whether, opportunity and safety being given, it is carried into action. Clearly only God knows whether it would have been carried into act.

5.

UNBELIEF.

BECAUSE of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.—Rom. xi, 20, 21.

THEY whose life is low and earthly, how can they believe in aught beyond the grave, when nothing of that life which is eternal has yet stirred within us? . . . He alone can believe in immortality who feels the resurrection in him already.

6.

CONTENTED TO DOUBT.

THIS is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.—John iii, 19.

COLD hearts are not anxious enough to doubt. Men who love will have their misgivings at times; that is not the evil. But the evil is when men go on in that languid doubting way, contented to doubt, proud of their doubts, morbidly glad to talk about them, without the manliness to say, "I must and will know the truth."

7.

THE SIN OF SINS.

HE that believeth not God hath made him a liar.—
I John v, 10.

DISTRUST is the sin of sins, which makes
sin sin. Luther said strongly, but not
too strongly, “Nothing damns except unbe-
lief.”

8.

INFIDELITY.

HE that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life :
and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but
the wrath of God abideth on him.—John iii, 36.

IN the darkest hour through which a human
soul can pass, whatever else is doubtful,
this at least is certain. If there be no God
and no future state, yet even then it is better
to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste
than licentious, better to be true than false,
better to be brave than a coward.

9.

OUR LIPS.

SET a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; keep the
door of my lips.—Psalm cxli, 3.

THE value of self-command and self-denial
is exemplified in the cases of the diplo-
matist who masters his features while listen-

ing; the man of the world who keeps his temper and guards his lips. How often after speaking hastily the thought which was uppermost, and feeling the cheek burn, you have looked back in admiration on some one who held his tongue even though under great provocation to speak.

10.

THE EVIL OF SLANDER.

WHOSO privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off.—Psalm ci, 5.

THE first evil consequence of slander is the harm that a man does to himself; “so is the tongue among the members, that it defileth the whole body,” . . . it effects a dissipation of spiritual energy. There are two ways in which the steam of machinery may find an outlet for its force: it may work, and if so it works silently; or it may escape, and that takes place loudly, in air and noise. . . . The next feature is, you cannot stop the consequences of a slander. “It sets on fire the whole course of nature.” . . . The third element of guilt lies in the unnaturalness of slander. “Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?”. . . The nature of man is to adore God and to love what is godlike in man. The office of the

tongue is to bless. Slander is guilty because it contradicts this. . . . The fourth point of guilt is the diabolical character of slander; the tongue "is set on fire of hell."

11.

THE REMEDY FOR SLANDER.

BE not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.
—Rom. xii, 21.

"**M**AN," says the apostle James, "was made in the image of God;" to slander man is to slander God: to love what is good in man is to love it in God. Love is the only remedy for slander; no set of rules or restrictions can stop it; we may denounce, but we shall denounce in vain.

12.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

HE that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?—Heb. x, 28, 29.

THE Pharisees beheld the works of Jesus. They could not deny that they were good works, but rather than acknowledge

that they were done by a good man through the cooperation of a divine Spirit, they said they were done by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. It was upon this occasion that our Redeemer said, "For a word spoken against the Holy Ghost there is no forgiveness in this world, or in the world to come." Our own hearts respond to the truth of this—to call evil good and good evil, to see the divinest good and call it satanic evil—below this lowest deep there is *not* a lower still. . . . Beware of that spirit which controversy fosters, of watching only for the evil in the character of an antagonist, . . . of magnifying every speck of evil and closing the eye to goodness! . . . I say it in all seriousness, adopting the language of the Bible and using it advisedly and with accurate meaning: the spirit which guides the press of this country, which dictates those personalities, which prevents controversialists from seeing what is good in their opponents, which attributes low motives to account for excellent lives, and teaches men whom to suspect and shun, rather than point out where it is possible to admire and love, is a spirit "set on fire of hell."

13.

PASSION NEVER REASONS.

HE that is slow to anger is better than the mighty ;
and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.
—Prov. xvi, 32.

ALL the passions deal not with the limitations of time and space, but belong to a world which is infinite. The strong passions, whether good or bad, never calculate. Anger, for example, does not ask for satisfaction in gold and silver ; it feels and resents a wrong that is infinite. Love demands the eternal blessedness of the thing loved ; it feels, and delights to feel, that it is itself infinite and can never end.

14.

SARCASM.

AND when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand : and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews !—Matt. xxvii, 29.

THERE is a persecution sharper than that of the ax. Cruel sneers and sarcasms and pitiless judgments and cold-hearted calumnies—these are persecutions. There is the tyrant of the nursery and the playground

and the domestic circle, as well as of the judgment hall. Did you ever do that? Did you ever pour bitterness into a heart that God was bruising by a cold laugh or a sneer or a galling suspicion?

15.

OUR JUDGMENT.

YE judge after the flesh ; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true : for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.—John viii, 15, 16.

IN every department of life there is an organ for judging. In the world of sense, the empiric intellect. In the world of spirit another organ altogether is needed; not the understanding, but the heart: "With the heart man believeth." Obedience is the organ by which you judge of things not seen or heard. One act of charity will teach you more of God than all the sages can. . . . The mightiest chemist knows nothing about immortality or about God. . . . Can you estimate music by mathematics? . . . You must do the will of God before you can judge of the doctrine of God. He only can understand who resembles.

16.

JUDGING.

WHY dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.—Rom. xiv, 10.

THE next time you are inclined to be flip-pant remember that Elijah's character alone can qualify for Elijah's judgment.

The larger, the better, the nobler your heart is the more you will be inclined to make allowances for others, and the more you will feel and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Would you be secure alike when the world pours its censure or its applause upon you? Feel hourly that God will judge.

17.

PRAISE.

LET another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.—Prov. xxvii, 2.

WE think that we hate falsehood, . . . but we are half pleased with the false praise. . . . Now he is a man of integrity who hates untruth *as* untruth: who resents the smooth and polished falsehood of society which does no harm.

We despise the man we praise too much; our genuine reverence for him is gone, and a secret contempt takes its place.

The worst acknowledgment that can be made of an instructive lecture is to clap.

There is an enlarging ennobling power in admiration of others, and in making allowance for them.

18.

PRIDE.

EVERYONE that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.—Prov. xvi, 5.

“COVET earnestly the best gifts.” Paul did not sneer at eloquence, nor contemn learning; but he said, These are your responsibilities. You are a steward; you have received. Beware that you be found faithful. Woe unto you if accomplishments have been the bait for admiration, or if beauty has left the mind empty or has allured others to evil. Woe if the gifts and manner that have made you acceptable have done no more.

19.

VANITY.

How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?—John v, 44.

THE vain man looks for the admiration of others—the proud man requires nothing but his own. Now it is this distinction which

makes vanity despicable to us all. . . . So soon as we let men see that we are suppliants for their admiration, we are at their mercy. We have given them the privilege of feeling that they are above us. . . . But it is very different with pride. No man can look down on him that is proud, for he asks no man for anything. They are forced to feel respect for pride because it is thoroughly independent of them. It scorns to care whether others take notice of them or not. It may be a more dazzling and a more splendid sin to be proud. It is no less hateful in God's sight.

20.

BOASTING.

GOD forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.—Gal. vi, 14.

STRONG feelings often evaporate in words. Strong expressions about self-sacrifice or self-denial, about a life sustained high above the world, often satisfy the heart and prevent it from rising to the grace talked about.

21.

HYPOCRISY.

THE triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment.—Job xx, 5.

THE Pharisee was not a hypocrite in our sense—a willful deceiver. In the Bible sense, a hypocrite is a false character. . . . Be religious. Be not anxious to seem so.

22.

INSINCERITY.

THOU shalt be sincere with the Lord thy God.—Deut. xviii, 13.

THERE are faults more heinous, but none more ruinous, than insincerity.

23.

HATRED.

IF a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?—1 John iv, 20.

EVERY time I hate a good man for his meekness or his goodness, find bad motives to account for the excellence of those who differ from me, judge sins of weakness more

severely than sins of wickedness, I am a sharer in the spirit to which he fell a victim.

Hold fast to love. If men wound your heart, let them not sour or embitter it. Be able always to say with Paul, "My heart is enlarged."

24.

WICKEDNESS.

PETER remembered the word of Jesus, who said unto him, Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly.—Matt. xxvi, 75.

A WEAKNESS of the heart produces more misery, more both to self and others, and is more severely chastised, than a deliberate wickedness. . . . My only solution of the mystery is this: The hardening effects of sin, which save from pain, are worse judgments than the sharpest suffering. Anguish is, I am more and more sure, corrective; hardness has in it no hope. . . . Agony and anguish—O, in these, far more than in sunshine, I can read a meaning and believe in infinite love.

25.

CURSES.

I SAY unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.—Luke vi, 27, 28.

MEN cannot injure us except so far as they exasperate us to forget ourselves. No man is really dishonored except by his own act. Calumny, injustice, ingratitude—the only harm these can do us is by making us bitter or gloomy, by shutting our hearts or souring our affections. We rob them of their power if they only leave us more sweet and forgiving. Love transmutes all curses and forces them to rain down blessings.

26.

AGONY OF SIN.

AND Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear.—Gen. iv, 13.

THE penal agonies of sin are chiefly those which are executed within. To live! *that* is hell, to live when you fain would die. . . . Worse than the viper's tooth is the punishment of no longer striving after goodness or aspiring

after the life of God. There is no punishment equal to the punishment of being base. To sink from sin to sin, from infamy to infamy, that is the fearful retribution which is executed in the spiritual world.

O, the unutterable anguish of a soul that is conscious of having degraded itself! A noble mind fears that; and the nobler the mind the keener the suffering. A spirit that is capable of infinite misery is capable of receiving the infinitude of goodness.

27.

THE SOUL DEGRADED.

THE Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.—Luke xix, 10.

CAIN is the dread type of hell. There is such a thing as being salted with fire; you cannot escape yourself. Go where you will, you carry with you a soul degraded, its power lost, its finer sensibilities destroyed. Just as the man cannot see through the glass on which he breathes, sin darkens the windows of the soul.

28.

A HARDENED HEART.

A NEW spirit will I put within you : and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.—Ezek. xxxvi, 26.

IF a man wanted to have a thoroughly callous and hardened heart, we can tell him of no way so sure as this : Let him become familiar with the distresses of his fellow-men, and do nothing to relieve them ; let him read of pauper misery, and content himself with theorizing about the improvidence of the poor ; let him listen to appeals from the pulpit which attempt to move his charity, and pass the plate without a sacrifice—we will promise him his sensibilities shall soon be placed beyond the power of wounding.

29.

THE DEEPEST CURSE OF SIN.

AND the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field ; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.—Gen. iii, 14.

IF anyone congratulates himself that sin has brought to him no positive misery, my brother, I pray you to remember that God's

worst curse was pronounced upon the serpent tempter. Apparently it was for less than that pronounced on the woman, but really it was far more terrible. Not pain, not shame—no, these are remedial, and may bring repentance at last—but to sink the angel in the animal, the spirit in the flesh; to be a reptile, and to eat the dust of degradation as if it were natural food. Eternity has no damnation deeper than that.

30.

THE STRENGTH OF SIN.

WHAT shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.—Rom. vii, 7.

SIN would not be so violent if it were not for the attempt of God's law to restrain it. It is the law which makes sin strong. "The strength of sin," Paul says, "is the law." God giveth us the victory through Christ. And when we are familiar with Paul's trains of thinking, we find this idea coming in perpetually. It runs like a colored thread through embroidery, appearing on the upper surface

every now and then in a different shape—a leaf, it may be, or a flower; but the same thread still, if you only trace it back with your finger. And this is the golden recurring thread in the mind of Paul. Restraint and law cannot check sin. The love of God in Christ, that, and only that, can give man the victory.

JULY.

DAILY THOUGHTS.

	JULY.
Exposure	I
Excommunication.	2
Punishment	3
Remorse.....	4
Self-respect Lost.....	5
“Too Late to Begin”.....	6
Suicide.....	7
Judgment Day.....	8
Repentance	9
Penitence.	10
Penance.....	11
Earnestness.....	12
Anxiety	13
A Man’s Last Chance.....	14
Confession	15
Apology.....	16
What is Forgiveness?.....	17
Why Forgive Others?.....	18
“What Shall I Do to be Saved?”.....	19
One Law for All.....	20
The First Thing to Do.....	21
Seeking God.....	22
Born of the Spirit.....	23
Delivered from Evil.....	24
Justification.....	25
Redemption.	26
What is Absolution ?.....	27
Can We Absolve?.....	28
The Object of Absolution.....	29
Absolution Gives Hope.....	30
How Absolution Gives Hope.....	31

1.

EXPOSURE.

GOD shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.—Eccles. xii, 14.

MANY a one becomes hardened [after exposure] who would otherwise have remained tolerably happy; in consequence of which we blame the exposure and not the guilt; we say, If it had been hushed up, all would have been well. Do not think so. It is true that remorse was produced by exposure, and that remorse was fatal; the sorrow which worketh death arose from that exposure, and so far exposure may be called the cause: had it never taken place respectability and comparative peace might have continued; but outward respectability is not change of heart. . . . A sin undetected is the soil out of which fresh sin will grow.

2.

EXCOMMUNICATION.

IN the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.—I Cor. v, 4, 5.

SEE how the anger of society represents and makes credible God's wrath. So long as the Corinthians petted this sinner conscience

slumbered; but when the voice of men was raised in condemnation conscience began its dreadful work, and then their anger became a type of coming doom. Remember, therefore, there is a real power lodged in humanity to bind as well as to loose; and remember that though man, God's representative, may exercise this fearful power wrongly, too long, and too severely, in venial faults, yet there is still a power, a terrible human power, which may make outcasts and drive men to infamy and ruin. Only, therefore, so far as man is Christ-like can he exercise this power in an entirely true and perfect manner. The world's excommunication or banishment is almost always unjust.

(See on ABSOLUTION, July 27.)

3.

PUNISHMENT.

WHEN I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.—Ezek. iii, 18.

IS the object of punishment threefold only—
to serve as an example to others, to ameliorate the offender, and in some cases to defend

society by its entire removal? Or is there a fourth element, the expression of righteous vengeance? For I cannot look upon vengeance as merely remedial. The sense of indignation which arises in the human bosom spontaneously against some crimes must, in a degree, be a reflection of that which resides in the mind of Deity.

4.

REMORSE.

GOD hath given them the spirit of remorse, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear.—Rom. xi, 8.

REMORSE is the consciousness of wrongdoing with *no* sense of love. Penitence is the same consciousness with the feeling of tenderness and gratitude added.

Bad as the results have been in the world of making light of sin, those of brooding over it too much have been worse. Remorse has done more harm than even hardihood. It was remorse which fixed Judas in an unalterable destiny; it was remorse which filled the monasteries for ages with men and women whose lives became useless to their fellow-creatures. . . . You remember how Christ treated sin. Sin of oppression and hypocrisy indignantly, but sin of frailty—"Hath no man condemned

thee?" "No man, Lord." "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." As if he would bid us think more of what we may be than of what we have been.

5.

SELF-RESPECT LOST.

CLEANSE thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.—Psalm xix, 12, 13.

IF a man lose the world's respect he can retreat back upon the consciousness of the God within. But if a man lose his own respect, he sinks down and down, and deeper yet, until he can get it back again by feeling that he is sublimely loved and he dares at last to respect that which God vouchsafes to care for.

6.

'TOO LATE TO BEGIN.'

LORD, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.—Luke xxiii, 42.

PERHAPS you feel that the best days of life are gone, and it is too late to begin things which were in your power once; still, my repentant brother, there is encouragement from your Master yet. Wake up to the opportunities that yet remain. Ten years of life—five

years—one year—say you have only that, will you sleep *that* away because you have already slept too long? Eternity is crying out to you louder and louder as you near its brink. Rise, be going; learn what you are not fit for, and give up wishing for it; learn what you *can* do, and do it with the energy of a man.

7.

SUICIDE.

WHEN lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.—James i, 15.

THE essential guilt of suicide is unbelief; that is, despair of God's love and goodness. . . . What is the essential guilt of suicide is settled by the reply of Christ when the evil suggestion was presented to him. He did not allege the Sixth Commandment, which he assuredly would have done had suicide been murder; but, "Thou shalt not tempt" (that is, try, make experiment of) "the Lord thy God." He treated it as a temptation, not to murder, but to distrust. . . . It is only loosely that we call suicide self-murder; well enough for popular conversation, but utterly unfit for the expression of accurate thought. All this comes from the loose way in which people think of sin.

8.

JUDGMENT DAY.

THESE shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.—Matt. xxv, 46.

THE judgment coming of the Son of man takes place wherever there is evil grown ripe, whenever corruption is complete. And the gathering of the Roman eagles is but a specimen of the way in which judgment at last overtakes every city, every country, and every man in whom evil has reached the point where there is no possibility of cure.

9.

REPENTANCE.

I HAVE somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.—Rev. ii, 4, 5.

“REPENT.” But that is precisely what man cannot do; it is alone the gift of the grace of God. The soul is powerless when it acts upon itself; the heart cannot produce one emotion simply by volition; therefore the apostle wisely gives us the means by which repentance may be produced: the first is, “Remember from whence thou art fallen;” the next is, “Do the first works.”

10.

PENITENCE.

HE said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things ; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.—John xxi, 17.

I BELIEVE the feeling of true penitence would express itself in such words as these: There *is* a righteousness and a beauty, though my life exhibits little of it. In that I can rejoice. Of that I can feel the surpassing loveliness. My doings? They are worthless; I cannot endure to think of them. I am not thinking of them. I have something else to think of. There, there, in that life I see it. And so the Christian—gazing not on what he is, but on what he desires to be—dares in penitence to say, That righteousness is mine.

11.

PENANCE.

FOLLOW peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.—Heb. xii, 14.

TO suffer pain for others without flinching, that is our Master's example; to accept poverty in order to do good for others, that is our Saviour's principle; but pain for the

mere sake of pain, that is not Christian; to become poor for the sake and the merit of being poor, is selfishness after all. To bear pain rather than surrender truth, or in order to save another is positive enjoyment as well as ennobling to the soul.

12.

EARNESTNESS.

THE kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.—Matt. xi, 12.

TIME and pains will do anything. This world is given as the prize for the men in earnest; and that which is true of this world is truer still of the world to come. Only there is this difference: In the pursuit of wealth, knowledge, or reputation, circumstances have power to mar the wisest schemes. . . . But in the kingdom of Christ, where inward *character* is the prize, no chance can rob earnestness of its exact proportioned due of success.

All sincerity forgets egotism. Moses' skin shone, but he *wist not* that the skin of his face shone.

13.

ANXIETY.

HAVE not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.—Josh. i, 9.

ONE sorrow, one deep, corroding anxiety, will wear deeper furrows in a cheek and brow than ten campaigns can do. One day's suspense will exhaust more and leave the cheek paler than a week's fasting. Thus it is a low estimate of the depth of apostolic trial to say that physical suffering was its chief element. And if this be true how much more degrading is it so to treat of the sufferings of Christ, of whom the prophet said, "He shall see of the travail of his *soul* and be satisfied."

14.

A MAN'S LAST CHANCE.

AND he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.—Luke xiii, 8, 9.

THAT which is declared of the world before the Flood, of Nineveh, of Jerusalem, is the history of each separate soul. Every man has

his day of grace : what in vulgar English we call his "chance." There comes to each man a crisis in his destiny, when evil influences have been removed, or an escape, or in some season of solitary thoughtfulness or disappointment. It were an awful thing to watch such a spirit if we knew that he is on trial now, by which his everlasting destiny is to be decided.

15.

CONFESSION.

IF we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.--I John 1. 9.

BY confession we sever ourselves from our sin and we disown it. We say, "I put it from me ; I repudiate it. Not I, O Lord, but sin that dwelleth in me. I struggle to the foot of thy Cross." Such was the immediate relief of David : "I have sinned." Instantly does the answer come : "The Lord also hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die." Such the relief of the publican : "He went down to his house justified."

16.

APOLOGY.

I WILL arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. --Luke xv, 18, 19.

THE first noblest attitude of man is innocence; the second noblest, apology. The manliness of saying, "I have done wrong, forgive me," is as high above that of the mere man of honor as the brilliancy of heaven's sun transcends the glitter of an earthly lamp.

When was it that the younger son in the parable received the ring and the robe, and the banquet, which represents the rapture of the sense of being forgiven? When he had fortitude enough to go back, mile by mile, step by step, every inch of the way he had gone wrong, had borne unflinchingly the sneer of his father's domestics, and, worse than all, the sarcasms of his immaculate brother, and manfully said out, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee."

17.

WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

HIDE thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.—Psalm li, 9.

CHRISTIAN forgiveness is not the natural growth of the heart, but an exotic in an unkindly soil. Forgiveness implies two things, favor and remission of punishment. . . . God's forgiveness is suspended on the condition of our forgiveness.

18.

WHY FORGIVE OTHERS?

BUT I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven.—Matt. v, 44, 45.

DO you recollect the ground on which he enforced forgiveness of injuries? A strange ground, surely, which never would have occurred except to One whose life was habitual imitation, . . . “That ye may be the children of [that is, resemble] your Father.”

19.

"WHAT SHALL I DO TO BE SAVED?"

IF thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
—Rom. x, 9.

ARM yourself with the laws of nature and you may call down the lightning from the sky; surround yourself with glass, and the lightning may play innocuously a few inches from you: it cannot touch you; you have obeyed the conditions of nature, and nature is on your side. In the same way there are conditions in the world of Spirit, by compliance with which God's Spirit comes into the soul with all its revelations, as surely as lightning from the sky, and as invariably—such conditions as these: "The secret of the Lord is with them that *fear* him." "If we *love* one another God dwelleth in us." "If any man will *do* his will, he shall know of the doctrine;" reverence, love, meekness, contrition, obedience—these conditions having taken place, God enters into the soul.

20.

ONE LAW FOR ALL.

IF any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.—John vii, 17.

THE condition of spiritual wisdom and certainty in truth is *obedience* to the will of God. . . . Observe the universality of the law: “If *any* man will do his will, he shall know.” . . . Annexed to this condition, or a part of it, is earnestness. “If any man *will* do his will.” It is not written, “If any man *does* his will,” but if any man has the spirit and desire. If we are in earnest, we shall persevere. . . . Act, be merciful and gentle—honest; force yourself to abound in little services; try to do good to others, and by all the laws of the human heart, by the word of God, you shall not be left in doubt.

21.

THE FIRST THING TO DO.

WHATSOEVER thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work . . . in the grave, whither thou goest.—Eccles. ix, 10.

THIS was Christ’s rule: “If any man will *do* his will.” . . . Whatever else may be wrong, it *must* be right to be pure—to be just and tender, and merciful and honest. It *must*

be right to love and to deny one's self. Men begin the other way. They say, "If I could but believe, then I would make my life true." No; God says, Act, make the life true, and then you will be able to believe. Live in earnest and you will know.

22.

SEEKING GOD.

BEHOLD, I stand at the door, and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.—Rev. iii, 20.

WE do not seek God, God seeks us. There is a Spirit pervading time and space who seeks the souls of men. At last the seeking becomes reciprocal—the divine Presence is felt afar, and the soul begins to turn toward it. Then when we begin to seek God, we become conscious that God is seeking us.

23.

BORN OF THE SPIRIT.

JESUS answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.—John iii, 5.

“EXCEPT a man be born again”—not he *shall* not, but—“he *cannot* enter into heaven.” There is nothing in him which has

affinity to anything in the Judge's bosom. A sympathy for that which is pure implies a repulsion of that which is impure. Hatred of evil is in proportion to the strength of love for good. To love good intensely is to hate evil intensely. Win the mind of Christ now, or else his sympathy for human nature will not save you from, but only insure, the recoil of abhorrence at last: "Depart from me! I never knew you."

O, it is an awful thing to see the blossom still upon the tree when the autumn is past, and the winter is at hand. An awful thing to see a man who ought to be clothed in Christ still living the life of the flesh and of passion; the summer is past, the harvest is ended, and he is not saved.

24.

DELIVERED FROM EVIL.

I PRAY not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.
—John xvii, 15.

NOT from physical evil, not from pain; Christ does not exempt his own from such kind of evil. Nay, we hesitate to call

pain and sorrow evils, when we remember what bright characters they have made. . . . But the evil from which Christ's sanctification separates the soul is the worst of evils—properly speaking, the only evil—sin, revolt from God, disloyalty to conscience, tyranny of the passions, strife of our self-will in conflict with the loving will of God.

25.

JUSTIFICATION.

BEING justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.—Rom. v, 1.

JUSTIFIED means acquitted, recognized, or acknowledged. Justification is a state of acceptance with God—admitted goodness. There are two states of justification, by the law and by faith. Justification by the law implies a scrupulous and accurate performance of minute acts of obedience in every particular; justification by faith is acceptance with God, not because a man is perfect, but because he does all in a trusting, large, generous spirit, actuated by a desire to please God.

26.

REDEMPTION.

FOR in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Rom. vi, 10, 11.

THERE are two kinds of death—one *in* sin, before redemption; the other *to* sin, which *is* redemption. . . . This is Paul's argument: If one died as the representative of all, then in that death all died; not that they were dead before, but dead *then*. Every Christian is dead in Christ's death and risen in Christ's resurrection.

Redemption is this—to forget self in God. . . . The Christian forgets himself in the feeling that he has to live here for the performance of the will of God.

27.

WHAT IS ABSOLUTION?

To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ.—2 Cor. ii, 10.

WHAT is forgiveness? It is God reconciled to us. What is absolution? It is the authoritative declaration that God is recon-

ciled. . . . When God forgives a sin it does not follow that he stops its consequences; for example, when he forgives an intemperate man whose health is ruined, forgiveness does not rest on his health, . . . but by producing softness and grateful penitence, it transforms them into blessings. This is God's forgiveness, and absolution is the conveyance to the conscience of the conviction of forgiveness; to absolve is to free—to comfort by strengthening—to afford repose from fear.

28.

CAN WE ABSOLVE?

WHOSOEVER sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.
—John xx, 23.

SAY, if you will, that was a peculiar power limited to the apostles. Nevertheless, the fact cannot be controverted that every day and every hour society—man—exerts this power. For example, a man may be in military life dissipated, which is morally as bad as cowardice; a woman may be selfish or censorious, or kill by bitter words; and yet these are faults not made hopeless by society; they do not *blight* character. But for a coward,

or a "daughter of shame" once fallen, there is no return. Down, down, and deeper yet to the deeps of infamy must one sink on whom society has set its black mark. The sins which society has bound on earth *are* bound; the sins which society has loosed are thereby robbed of a portion of their curse. Paul well knew how the sentence of society crushes.

29.

THE OBJECT OF ABSOLUTION.

YE ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.—2 Cor. ii, 7.

THE love of God would be unintelligible unless we had loving feelings of our own, unless we felt the love of men to us. . . . And God's forgiveness is unintelligible, actually incredible, except through human forgiveness which we see. . . . Suppose that this Corinthian offender had been met on every side with horror and detestation, had seen nowhere a pitying eye. Is it not certain, by the laws of our humanity, that this judgment of society would have seemed to him a reflection of the judgment of God? On the other hand, would not the forgiveness of the Corinthian society

have caused the hope of God's forgiveness to dawn upon his heart? And this in exact proportion, just as the men who so forgave were holy men. The more like God they were, the more would their forgiveness be a type and assurance of God's forgiveness.

30.

ABSOLUTION GIVES HOPE.

THAT ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.—Luke v, 24.

SOME of us can tell you how the recollection of sin committed haunts men like a fiend. And so long as society lays its ban on the offender, or so long as he feels that a secret crime, if once known, would be accursed of the world, so long hope appears to him impossible. It is in vain that you speak of God's love and mercy in Christ to such a man. He will cry, "Yes; but is he merciful to ME?" Therefore, over and above the general declaration of God's mercy, there is needed, if you would comfort truly, a special, personal, human assurance to the individual.

31.

HOW ABSOLUTION GIVES HOPE.

WHEN ye come into a house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it : but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.—Matt. x, 12, 13.

YOU will object, perchance : If God has forgiven the sinner, a man's word cannot add to it ; if he has not forgiven him, a man's word cannot alter it. Yes, that is true ; but now, in reply, consider a distinct command of Christ : "Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And *if* the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it : if not it shall turn to you again." Now a man might have said, What good is there in saying "peace?" If God's peace be in the family, you cannot add to it ; if not, you cannot alter it. But Christ says, Give your blessing : it will not create peace, but it will make it felt. . . . So if the sin be forgiven, absolution will convey the soothing conviction to the soul ; if not, your absolution will turn to you again. When we treat the guilty with tenderness, hope rises in them toward God ; their hearts say, "They love us ; will not God forgive and love us too?"

AUGUST.

DAILY THOUGHTS.

	AUG.
The Sinner's Reception.....	I
Ecstasy.....	2
Children of Light.....	3
Feeling.....	4
Religious Feeling.....	5
Religious Excitement.....	6
Courage.....	7
Dare to be True.....	8
Zeal.....	9
Fluency and Eloquence.....	10
Imitation and Copy.....	11
The Ambition of the World.....	12
The Ambition of the Christian.....	13
Influence Resides in the Will.....	14
Influence of the World.....	15
Unconscious Influence.....	16
Friendship.....	17
How to Retain Friendship.....	18
Alone.....	19
Solitude.....	20
Suffering.....	21
Sorrow.....	22
The Sanctifying Power of Sorrow.....	23
The Function of Sorrow.....	24
Sympathy.....	25
Hiding Our Face from Jesus.....	26
Brotherhood.....	27
The Beggar.....	28
The Poor.....	29
The Middle Class.....	30
Would You Be Rich?.....	31

1.

THE SINNER'S RECEPTION.

BUT the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry. —Luke xv, 22, 23.

THIS banquet represents to us two things. It tells of the father's gladness on the son's return. That represents God's joy on the reformation of a sinner. It tells of a banquet and a dance given to the long lost son. That represents the sinner's gladness when he first understood that God was reconciled to him in Christ. There is a strange, almost wild, rapture, a strong gush of love and happiness in those days which are called the days of the first conversion. . . . Joy is not delayed till we deserve it. Just as soon as a sinful man trusts that the mercy of God in Christ has done away with his transgression, the ring and the robe and the shoes are his.

2.

ECSTASY.

AND he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.—Acts iii, 8.

JOY seems to be felt more vividly and more exuberantly by men who have sinned much than by men who have grown up consistently from childhood with religious education. Rapture belongs to him whose sins which are forgiven are many. . . . It is meet that God should be glad on the reclamation of a sinner. It is meet that the sinner, looking down into the dreadful chasm over which he had been tottering, should feel a shudder of delight through his frame on thinking of his escape. . . . A consistent Christian may not have rapture; but he has that which is much better than rapture, calmness—God's serene and perpetual presence. One to whom much is forgiven has much joy. . . . but a terrible struggle is in store for him yet. Grudge him not one hour of unclouded exultation. But religion's best gift, *that* belongs to him who has lived steadily and walked with duty. Joy is well in its way, but a few flashes of joy are

trifles in comparison with a life of peace. Which is best: the flash of joy lighting up the whole heart, and then darkness until the next flash comes, or the steady calm sunlight of day in which men work?

3.

CHILDREN OF LIGHT.

THE children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.—Luke xvi, 8.

“CHILDREN of light” is a wide term. There is a difference between life and light. To have light is to perceive truth and know duty. To have life is to be able to live out truth and to perform duty. Many a man has clear light who has not taken hold of life. Many a man is the child of light who does not walk as the child of life. So far as a man feels that eternity is long, time short, so far he is a child of light. So far as he believes the body nothing in comparison with the soul, the present in comparison with the future, so far as he has felt the power of sin and the sanctifying power of the death of Christ, so far he is a child of light.

4.

FEELING.

THEN Job answered and said, I have heard many such things : miserable comforters are ye all.—Job xvi, 1, 2.

WE prize feeling and praise its possessor. But feeling is only a sickly exotic in itself—a passive quality, having in it nothing moral, no temptation, no victory. A man is no more a good man for having feeling than he is for having a delicate ear for music, or a far-seeing optic nerve.

5.

RELIGIOUS FEELING.

I HAVE somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.—Rev. ii, 4.

TO say that in proportion as wisdom and faith increase, in that proportion will love and tenderness abate, is to proclaim ruin to the Christian character.

Of the church of Ephesus, . . . her emotions toward God had lost their strength and vividness, and therefore her Lord declared that he would not have the outward husk without the inward kernel. From which it is manifest that love has an inward grace and beauty, preciousness and value in itself ; the act is dear to God simply because of the affection that has prompted it.

6.

RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENT.

THEN he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?—Acts xvi, 29, 30.

YE that have been impressed, beware how you let those impressions die away. Die they will and must; we cannot live in excitement forever; but beware of their leaving behind them nothing except a languid, jaded heart. If God ever gave you the excitements of religion, breaking in upon your monotony as John's teaching broke in upon that of Jerusalem, take care. There is no restoring of elasticity to the spring that has been overbent. Let impression pass on at once to action.

7.

COURAGE.

I HAVE fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.—2 Tim. iv, 7.

NONE but a brave man can be a good man. The very tenderness of the coward will be pitiful. . . . Contrast the courage which for Christ's sake dares to be called a coward, and bear shame.

8.

DARE TO BE TRUE.

WHOSOEVER therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.—Matt. x, 32.

KNOWING a truth is one thing, being able to express it is quite another thing; and then again, to be *able* to express a truth is one thing, and to *dare* to do it is another thing altogether. Utterance implies both power and courage.

9.

ZEAL.

IT is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.—Gal. iv, 18.

NO enthusiasm will last long that is not deeply based—a few sarcastic sneers will shake it, for if it comes from following the enthusiasm of others, it will go with the coldness of others.

Zeal, even though it exceed the bounds of righteousness, is a more hopeful thing than lukewarmness; better to be like the apostle Paul before he was an apostle, better to be like the sons of thunder, better to be like the ancient prophets using the stern language of denunciation, than like Pilate, unconcerned as to the fate of his prisoner so long as he himself was absolved from blame.

10.

FLUENCY AND ELOQUENCE.

THE officers answered, Never man spake like this man.—John vii, 46.

THERE is a great distinction between eloquence and fluency; fluency is command of words, eloquence of words which express thought. Fluency John had not; short, sharp, decisive words were his—no ornament or trick of oratory there. Let us never covet fluency; it is a fatal gift. Let every man covet eloquence. It is to speak the right thing at the right time, in the right way. Silence may be eloquence, and stammering lips may be eloquent.

11.

IMITATION AND COPY.

WHAT glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.—1 Peter ii, 20,

DISTINGUISH between a model and an example. You copy the outline of a model, you imitate the spirit of an example. Christ is our example. Christ is not our

model. You might copy the life of Christ, make him a model in every act, and yet you might be not one whit more of a Christian than before. . . . On the other hand, you might imitate Christ, get his Spirit, do not one single act which he did, but every act in his spirit; you might be rich, whereas he was poor; never teach, whereas he was teaching always; and yet the spirit of his self-devotion might have saturated your whole being and penetrated into the life of every act. Then Christ would have become your example; for we can only imitate that of which we have caught the spirit.

12.

THE AMBITION OF THE WORLD.

WHOSOEVER exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—Luke xiv, 11.

WHEN a man comes to the close of his existence he begins to feel as if he had not had justice done him—he begins to feel as if he had not been understood, he is not where he ought to be. It is the adoration of self that makes men miserable. . . . Only let it be known to a proud spirit that one man

has sneered, it matters not that the world is deafening him with its admiration, that sneer will shoot a pang of wretchedness through the hour of his proudest triumph.

13.

THE AMBITION OF THE CHRISTIAN.

FATHER, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.
—Luke xxii, 42.

“**T**HY will be done!” To say this in every dispensation, be it what it may, is the whole of religion; for what have we to do but to have our wills entirely merged in that of our Father? And when this is done, we are ripe for the garner.

There is one thing, and but one on earth, worth living for—and that is to do God's work, and gradually grow in conformity to his image by mortification and self-denial and prayer.

Set before you high models. Try to live with the most generous, and to observe their deeds. Be contented, yet aspire; that should be the faith of all, and the two are quite compatible.

14.

INFLUENCE RESIDES IN THE WILL.

THE good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.—Rom. vii, 19.

THE secret of influence is will; not goodness, not badness—both bad and good may have it—but will. You cannot counterfeit will if you have it not.

It is the price which all who are possessed of influence must pay, that their acts must be measured not in themselves, but according to their influence on others.

15.

INFLUENCE OF THE WORLD.

AND I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.—Rev. xviii, 4.

MEN, when they mix together, corrupt each other; each contributes his own vices and his irreverence of the others' good to destroy every standard of goodness, and each in contact loses his own excellences,

16.

UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE.

IRON sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.—Prov. xxvii, 17.

INDIRECT influence is often far more successful than that which is direct, and for this reason: the direct aims that we make to convert others may be contradicted by our lives, while the indirect influence is our very life. What we really are, somehow or other, will ooze out in tone, in look, in act, and this tells upon those who come in daily contact with us.

It is not talent, nor power, nor gifts that do the work of God, but it is that which lies within the power of the humblest; it is the simple, earnest life hid with Christ in God.

17.

FRIENDSHIP.

HE that walketh with wise men shall be wise.—Prov. xiii, 20.

CULTIVATE *familiar* intimacy only with those who love good and God.

18.

HOW TO RETAIN FRIENDSHIP.

A MAN that hath friends must show himself friendly :
and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.
—Prov. xviii, 24.

OFTEN it is the safest way to shut the eyes
and be half blind to many things in a
friend's character, . . . like pearls in the sea-
shell—aberrations from healthful nature, if you
will, but more tender and tinted with heaven-
lier iridescence than even the shell itself.

Learn never to smooth away, through fear
of results, the difficulties of love or friendship
by concealment or a subtle suppression of
facts or feelings. Reprove, explain, submit
with all gentleness, and yet with all truth and
openness. The deadliest poison you can in-
still into the wine of life is a fearful reserve
which creates suspicion, or a lie which will
canker and kill your own love, and through
that your friend's.

19.

ALONE.

WHAT, could ye not watch with me one hour?
—Matt. xxvi, 40.

THE life that is the deepest and the truest
will feel most vividly both its desolation
and its majesty. We live and die alone. God

and our own souls—we fall back upon them at last.

Elijah, stern and iron as he was, should be a warning to any common man to expect that many a day he will have to sit under his juniper tree in despondency and bitter sense of isolation and uselessness.

20.

SOLITUDE.

—AND he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while.—Mark vi, 31.

IN speaking of Knox's *Rambles*, and the effect of association with men in sharpening the intellect, you remark that this seems inconsistent with the fact that great spirits have been nursed in solitude. Yes, but not the solitude of the plowman. Moses was forty years in Midian, but he had the education of Egypt before, and habits of thought and observation began. I remember a line of Goethe's in which he says :

“Talent forms itself in solitude,
Character in the storms of life.”

The soul collects its mightiest forces by being thrown in upon itself. . . . But on the

other hand, solitude unbroken from earliest infancy, or with nothing to sharpen the mind either by collision with other minds or the expectation of some new sphere of action, shortly would, I suppose, rust the mental energies.

21.

SUFFERING.

I TAKE pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.—2 Cor. xii, 10.

SUFFERING is of two kinds: pain which we endure in our own persons—Christ was “a Man of sorrows;” and pain which we know by familiarity with others' suffering—Christ was “acquainted with grief.”

The Christian rejoices *in* tribulation—in God; but that in spite of, not because of, tribulation.

We are perfected through suffering. What worthy crown can any son of man wear upon this earth, except a crown of thorns? A Christian's motto everywhere and always is Victory.

A man's work is not done upon earth as long as God has anything for him to suffer;

the greatest of our victories is to be won in passive endurance ; in humbleness, in reliance, and in trust we are to learn to be still, and know that he is God.

22.

SORROW.

WE glory *in* tribulations also ; knowing that tribulation worketh patience ; and patience, experience ; and experience, hope : and hope maketh not ashamed.—Rom. v, 3-5.

THE inner mind, wrapped up, as it seems, by impenetrable defenses, is yet more exposed to shocks and wounds than the outer skin tissue. The more emphatically you are the son of man with human nature in its perfection in you, the more exquisitely can your feelings bleed. That which a base and craven spirit smiles at is torture to the noblest and the best. It was for this reason that Christ was in a peculiar sense the "Man of sorrows." Things which rough and scornful men would have shaken from them without feeling went home sharp and deep into his gentle and loving heart. "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow."

23.

THE SANCTIFYING POWER OF SORROW.

THIS I say, brethren, the time is short : it remaineth, that . . . they that weep be as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not.—I Cor. vii, 29, 30.

“**A**S though they wept not ;” that is as though God had already removed their grief. Else, in this world of sorrow and distress, how should we escape despair? Familiarity with eternal things subdues grief, calms and softens it, gives it a true perspective.

It is only in afflictions borne for Christ’s sake—that is, in Christ’s name and with Christ’s spirit—that we can rejoice. . . . And observe, it is specially the humble, womanlike, passive side of endurance, the courage of patience, that is the peculiarity of the Cross.

24.

THE FUNCTION OF SORROW.

THE God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.—I Peter v, 10.

THE simplest and most obvious use of sorrow is to remind of God. Jairus and the woman, like many others, came to Christ from a sense of want. It would seem that a certain

shock is needed to bring us in contact with reality. We are not conscious of our breathing till obstruction makes it felt. We are not aware of the possession of a heart until some disease, some sudden joy or sorrow, rouses it into extraordinary action. And we are not conscious of the mighty cravings of our half divine humanity, we are not aware of the God within us, till some chasm yawns which must be filled.

The account of life which represents it as probation is inadequate. The truest account of this mysterious existence seems to be that it is intended for the development of the soul's life, for which sorrow is indispensable. Every son of man who would attain the true end of his being must be baptized with fire. It is the law of our humanity that we must be perfected through suffering.

25.

SYMPATHY.

FINALLY, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another ; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. —I Peter iii, 8.

THE perfect One gave sympathy and wanted it. Gave it, as every page will show ; wanted it—"Could ye not watch with me?" "Will ye also go away?" Found it in John and Martha and Mary and Lazarus.

There is not a natural throb which ever agitated the bosom of humanity which Christ has not felt.

26.

HIDING OUR FACE FROM JESUS.

THE poor shall never cease out of the land : therefore, I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.—Deut. xv, 11.

WE hide our face from the “Man of sorrows” when we forget that we are sent into this world to relieve misery; . . . “want of thought,” that is the sin of those who go through life, not suspecting, and not caring to inquire how much there is of human desolation.

27.

BROTHERHOOD.

WHICH now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.—Luke x, 36, 37.

OUR tendencies to evil, our capacities of excellence are the same in all classes. It is just in proportion as men recognize this real, original identity of all human nature that it is possible on this earth to attain the realization of human brotherhood.

28.

THE BEGGAR.

AND it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.—Luke xvi, 22.

THAT wretched beggar that holds his hat at the crossing of the street is God's child as well as you, if he only knew it. You know it, he does not—that is the difference.

29.

THE POOR.

HEARKEN, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?—James ii, 5.

TO feel with the poor we must understand them first. Don't think it always necessary to go with your purse or your advice. "Visit" as a friend.

Woe to us in the great day of God, if we have been the sycophants of the rich instead of the redressers of the poor man's wrongs—woe to us if we have been tutoring David into respect to his superior, Nabal, and forgotten that David's case, not Nabal's, is the cause of God.

30.

THE MIDDLE CLASS.

HE said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.—Luke xii, 15.

THE middle classes already have every real enjoyment which the wealthiest can have. The only thing they have not is the ostentation of the means of enjoyment. More would enable them to multiply equipages, houses, books. It could not enable them to enjoy them more.

31.

WOULD YOU BE RICH?

THESE are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, . . . entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.—Mark iv, 18, 19.

NOT what a man has, but what he is, *that*, through time and through eternity, is his real and proper life. . . . If you will be rich you must be content to pay the price of falling into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in perdition; and if that price be too high to pay, then you must be content with the quiet valleys of existence, where alone it is well with us—kept out of the inheritance, but having instead God for your portion.

SEPTEMBER.

DAILY THOUGHTS.

	SEPT.
The Gentleman of the World.....	1
The Christian Gentleman.....	2
Politeness.....	3
Philanthropy.	4
Giving.....	5
Stewards.....	6
Servitude.....	7
Failure.....	8
Mistakes.....	9
Doubts of Christians.....	10
Complaining.....	11
Despondency.....	12
The Valley of the Shadow of Death.....	13
Encouragement.....	14
Your Pledge to God.....	15
Try Again.....	16
Overcoming.....	17
Obedience.....	18
Fearlessly Do Right.	19
Spiritual Strength.....	20
Belief.....	21
Duty.....	22
Sacrifices.....	23
That Which Remains of the Afflictions of Christ.	24
Progress.....	25
Work Out Your Own Salvation.....	26
Work.....	27
Deeds.	28
Like Christ.....	29
How to Become Like Christ.....	30

1.

THE GENTLEMAN OF THE WORLD.

IF any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.—James iii, 2.

A WELL-BRED person with every emotion under control, with features immovable—we are as sure of meeting consideration from him as if he were influenced by the Gospel. Yet all this bland courtesy is on the outside.

A high-bred man never forgets himself, controls his temper, does nothing in excess, is urbane, dignified, and that even to persons whom he is inwardly wishing far away.

The more refined and courteous a man is the more he will avoid in conversation a direct mention of himself.

2.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN.

CHARITY suffereth long, and is kind ; charity envieth not ; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth.—I Cor. xiii, 4-8. Also the whole of Rom. xii.

A CHRISTIAN *is* what the gentleman of the world *seems* to be. Love gives him a delicate tact which never offends, because it

is full of sympathy. It discerns far off what would hurt fastidious feelings, feels with others, and is ever on the watch to anticipate their thoughts. And hence the only true refinement comes from Christian love.

You may be affable and yet have a sacred spell of dignity around you that none would wish to break through. Was the Godhead lowered by condescension? . . . So with us. Haughtiness and reserve leave the heart barren; condescension is the true dignity of man.

3.

POLITENESS.

I PLEASE all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.—
I Cor. x, 33.

THAT politeness which springs spontaneously from the heart, the desire to put others at their ease, to save the stranger from a sensation of awkwardness, to soothe the feeling of inferiority—that, ennobled as it is by love, mounts to the high character of a heavenly grace.

4.

PHILANTHROPY.

LET your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.—Matt. v, 16.

PHILANTHROPY! It is a dream without Christ. Why should I love the Negro or the foreigner? You can give no reason except an opinion. Why should I not be as exclusive as I please, and shrink from other nations and keep up national hatred? Well, in reply to that, . . . we are one in Christ—one family. Human blessedness is impossible except through union one with another. But union is impossible except in God. This was the truth taught by the showbread piled upon the altar. Each loaf was offered for, and represented a tribe; and the whole twelve, with different characteristics and various interests, were yet one in God, and therefore one with each other.

5.

GIVING.

EVERY man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.—Deut. xvi, 17.

[Compare Deut. xvi, 10 and 17, with 1 Cor. xvi, 2, and 2 Cor. ix, 7.]

MEN do not give as God hath prospered them, because they do not give systematically ; that is, they who have most are not they who give most, but the reverse. It is a fact, the more we have the less we give.

It is not the value of the contribution, but the love of the contributor which makes it precious. The offering is sanctified or made unholy in God's sight by the spirit in which it is given.

Often the highest charity is simply to pay liberally for all things done for you ; because to underpay workmen, and then be bountiful, is not charity.

6.

STEWARDS.

IT is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.—1 Cor iv, 2.

ALL that a steward can have of merit is fidelity, and fidelity is exactly that which men cannot judge—it is a secret hidden with God.

7.

SERVITUDE.

FATHER, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.—Luke xv, 18, 19.

AFTER a life of wild sinfulness religion is servitude at first, not freedom. Observe, he went back to duty with the feeling of a slave. Anyone who has lived in the excitement of the world, and then tried to settle down at once to quiet duty knows how that is.

The first step in spirituality is to get a distaste for common duties. . . . But the last and highest step in spirituality is made in feeling these common duties again to be divine and holy. This is the true liberty of Christ when a free man binds himself in love to duty. Not in shrinking from our distasteful occupations, but in fulfilling them, do we realize our high origin.

God only notices the love, the adoration, the service we show to his dear Son.

8.

FAILURE.

OUR light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.—2 Cor. iv, 17.

IT has been observed of the holy men of Scripture that their most signal failures took place in those points of character for which they were remarkable in excellence. Moses was the meekest of men, but it was Moses who “spake unadvisedly with his lips.” St. John was the apostle of charity; yet he is the very type to us of religious intolerance, in his desire to call down fire from heaven.

Work, true work, done honestly and manfully for Christ never can be a failure. Leave eternity to show that it has not been in vain in the Lord.

9.

MISTAKES.

THERE is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?—1 Cor. vi, 7.

WHAT we are and where we are is God’s providential arrangement, God’s doing, though it may be man’s misdoing; and the

manly and the wise way is to look your disadvantages in the face, and see what can be made out of them. Life, like war, is a series of mistakes, and he is not the best Christian nor the best general who makes the fewest false steps; but he is the best who wins the most splendid victories by the retrieval of mistakes. Forget mistakes; organize victory out of mistakes.

10.

DOUBTS OF CHRISTIANS.

THE next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.—John i, 29.

John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?—Luke vii, 19.

DOUBT often comes from inactivity. We cannot give the philosophy of it, but this is the fact, Christians who have nothing to do, but sit thinking of themselves, meditating, sentimentalizing, are almost sure to become the prey of dark, black misgivings.

By idleness, by neglected prayer, we lose our power of realizing things not seen. . . . Doubts can only be dispelled by that kind of active life that realizes Christ.

11.

COMPLAINING.

BE still, and know that I am God.—Psalm xlvi, 10.

MY firm conviction is that denunciation does no good. Anathemas, whether thundered from church courts, from pulpits, or from platforms, are foolish and impotent. It is the principle of that book, the spirit of which I desire for my guide throughout life, that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

12.

DESPONDENCY.

THERE came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? . . . Go, return on thy way.—Kings xix, 13, 15.

“WHAT doest thou here?”—here, in this short life. There is work to be done, evil put down, God’s Church purified, good men encouraged, doubting men directed, a country to be saved, time going, life a dream, eternity long, one chance, and but one forever. “What *doest thou* here? Arise, go on thy way.” Fill up every hour, leave no crevice or craving for a remorse or a repentance to creep through afterward. Let not the mind brood on self; save it from speculation.

13.

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.*

WHY art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.—Psalm xlii, 5.

THERE is a grief worse than lack of bread or loss of friends. Men in former times called it spiritual desertion. . . . This feeling of forsakenness is no proof of being forsaken. Mourning after an absent God is an evidence of love as strong as rejoicing in a present one. . . . Distinguish between the *feeling* of faith that God is present and the *hope* of faith that he will be so. No effort can make you feel; then you hope. There has been one at least whose apparent forsakenness and whose seeming doubt bears the stamp of the majesty of faith. “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

14.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

LET us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.—Gal. vi, 9.

SAINT PAUL is not speaking of doctrine, but of life [1 Cor. iv, 7-21]. He declares the life of suffering, of hardship in the cause

*“Valley of the Shadow of Death” does not mean death of body. In *Pilgrim's Progress* Christian passed through the valley years before he came to the river of Death.

of duty, to be higher than the life of popularity and self-indulgence. He says that the majesty of a man consists . . . in this, in being not superhuman, but human; in being through and through *a man*, according to the divine idea; a man whose chief privilege it is to be a minister—that is, a servant, a follower of Him who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

15.

YOUR PLEDGE TO GOD.

THAT which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.—Deut. xxiii, 23.

YOU cannot, in the courts of heaven, distinguish between an oath to God and a word pledged to man.

16.

TRY AGAIN.

WE are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.—2 Cor. iv, 8, 9.

A CHRISTIAN ought to feel always that he has partially failed, but that ought not to be the only feeling. Faith ought ever

to be a sanguine, cheerful thing ; and perhaps in practical life we could not give a better account of faith than by saying that it is, amid much failure, having the heart to *try again*. Our best deeds are marked by imperfection, but if they really were our best, "forgetting the things that are behind," we shall do better next time.

17.

OVERCOMING.

THIS I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.—Gal. v, 16.

I WILL quote a passage which has struck me: "The true art of moral culture is to balance extravagant tendencies by quickening those which are languid. Growth is a safer means of producing harmony in character than repression." You cannot descend to the regions of the lower nature and wrestle with success there. You must go alone and fight them, as Perseus fought the dragon that would have destroyed Andromeda, on wings in the air.

18.

OBEDIENCE.

BEHOLD, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.—1 Sam. xv, 22.

IT has been well remarked, It is not said that *after* keeping God's commandments, but *in* keeping them, there is great reward. God has linked these two things together, and no man can separate them—obedience and peace.

19.

FEARLESSLY DO RIGHT.

SEEING then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.—2 Cor. iii, 12.

BE sure that straight-forwardness is more than a match at last for all the involved windings of deceit. In your daily life do what you feel right, say what you feel true, and leave, with faith and boldness, the consequences to God.

20.

SPIRITUAL STRENGTH.

AND he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.—2 Cor. xii, 9.

SPIRITUAL strength consists of two things—power of will and power of self-restraint. It requires two things, therefore, for

its existence—strong feelings and strong command over them. . . . He who with strong passions remains chaste, he who, keenly sensitive, with manly power of indignation in him, can be provoked and yet refrain himself and forgive—these are strong men, spiritual heroes.

21.

BELIEF.

JESUS said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.—Mark ix, 23.

THE man who tries to discover a god outside of himself instead of within, is doing just like him who endeavors to find out the place of the rainbow by hunting for it. You must be pure before you can believe in purity ; generous, before you can believe in unselfishness. In all moral truth what you are that is the condition of your belief. Only to him in whom infinite aspirations stir can an infinite One be proved.

Belief is power. Only so far as a man believes strongly, mightily, can he act cheerfully, or do anything that is worth the doing.

22.

DUTY.

LET us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : Fear God, and keep his commandments : for this is the whole duty of man.—Eccles. xii, 13.

NOR do I ever expect to find the line of duty—lying as it does, up the hill, with the cross at the top—a pleasant path.

It is good to be honest, to pay one's debts, but when you are simply doing your duty do not talk of a noble life. The duty that lies immediately before a man ; let him bend himself anxiously and earnestly to that. But as he values peace, let him not look at self.

Do the duty next you ; leave the rest to develop itself.

23.

SACRIFICES.

MY son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.—Gen. xxii, 8.

THE Christian sacrifice is the surrender of the will, the surrender of ourselves. When all the will has been submitted then God says, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." . . . We need not seek for sacrifices. We need not be anxious to find a

cross. . . . Plenty will occur every hour and moment by God's appointment, better than any devised by you. God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.

24.

THAT WHICH REMAINS OF THE AFFLICTIONS
OF CHRIST.

I REJOICE in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church.—Col. i, 24. [Rev. Ver.]

WAS there something behindhand of Christ's sufferings remaining uncompleted, of which the sufferings of Paul could be in any sense the complement? He says there was. Could the sufferings of Paul for the Church in any form of correct expression be said to eke out the sufferings that were incomplete? In one sense it is true to say that there is one offering once offered *for* all. But it is equally true to say that that one offering is valueless, except so far as it is completed and repeated in the life and self-offering *of* all. . . . The sacrifice of Christ is done over again in every life which is lived not to self, but to God.

25.

PROGRESS.

SPEAKING the truth in love, [we] may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.—Eph. iv, 15.

NO man ever progressed to greatness and goodness but through great mistakes. It is the work of a long life to become a Christian. Many, O many a time are we tempted to say, "I make no progress at all. It is only failure after failure." Now look at the sea when the flood is coming in. Go and stand by the seabeach, and you will think that the careless flux and reflux is but retrogression equal to the advance. But look again in an hour's time, and the whole ocean has advanced. Every advance has been beyond the last, and every retrograde movement has been an imperceptible trifle less than the last. This is progress to be estimated at the end of hours not minutes. And this is *Christian* progress. . . . Every advance is a real gain, and part of it is never lost. Both when we advance and when we fail we gain. The flood of spirit life has carried us up higher on the everlasting shore where . . . all is safe at last.

26.

WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION.

WORK out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.—Phil. ii, 12, 13.

IT is not, Work in order to be saved ; but, Because you *are* saved. It is not, Labor that you may be accepted ; but, Labor because you are accepted. Ye are sons of God ; here are God's promises, therefore become what you are reckoned to be ; let the righteousness which is *imputed* to you become righteousness *in* you. "Ye are the temple of God ;" cleanse yourself.

27.

WORK.

NOT everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.—Matt. vii, 21.

THE love of goodness is real and healthy only when we do it.

The spiritual life is not knowing, nor hearing, but doing. We only know so far as we can do ; we learn to do by doing ; what we do truly, rightly, in the way of duty, that, and only that, we are.

No man ever lived whose acts were not smaller than himself.

Labor brings out strength of character. A world where all was rest would make the human race degraded.

28.

DEEDS.

I HEARD a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.—Rev. xiv, 13.

WHAT you have done lasts—lasts in you. Through ages, through eternity, what you have done for Christ, that, and only that, you are. “They rest from their labors,” saith the Spirit, “and their works do follow them.”

“What I have written I have written.” For deeds are permanent and irrevocable; that which you have written on life is forever. You cannot rub it out; there it is forever: your epistle to the world and to the everlasting ages “to be known and read of all men.” This is it which makes life so all-important. O, then, take care *what* you write, for you can never unwrite it again.

29.

LIKE CHRIST.

THE fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.—Gal. v, 22, 23.

MAN resembles God; all spirits, all minds, are of the same family. The Father bears a likeness to the Son whom he has created. The mind of God is similar to the mind of man. Love does not mean one thing in man and another thing in God. Holiness, justice, pity, tenderness, these are in the Eternal the same in kind which they are in the finite. The present manhood of Christ conveys this deeply important truth, that the divine heart is human in its sympathies.

30.

HOW TO BECOME LIKE CHRIST.

IF any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.—Rom. viii, 9.

THE truer you are, the humbler, the nobler, the more you will feel Christ to be your King.

It is not by saying Christ's words or by doing Christ's acts, but it is by breathing his spirit that we become like him.

OCTOBER.

DAILY THOUGHTS.

	OCT.
Law.....	I
Free From the Law.....	2
Christian Freedom.....	3
An Oath.....	4
Gifts.....	5
Grace.....	6
Faith.....	7
Saving Faith.....	8
Faith that is Dead.....	9
Trust.....	10
Virtue.....	11
Chastity.....	12
Tongues.....	13
Tongues May Be Understood.....	14
Prophecy.....	15
What is Truth?.....	16
To Witness to the Truth.....	17
Truthfulness and Veracity.....	18
Spiritual Wisdom.....	19
Reverence.....	20
Affection.....	21
Sensitiveness.....	22
The Object of Love.....	23
Love of the World.....	24
Love of Parents.....	25
Love of God.....	26
Charity.....	27
Modesty.....	28
Meekness.....	29
Righteousness.....	30
Unworldliness.....	31

1.

LAW.

ALL the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.—Gal. v, 14.

ACCORDING to Paul, what the law does is to exasperate sin into greater activity: “I had not known sin but by the law.” All that law can do is to manifest sin, just as the dam thrown against the river shows its strength; law can arrest sometimes the commission of sin, but never the inward principle.

The moral laws of this universe are as immutable as God himself. God cannot alter those laws: he cannot make wrong right. He cannot make truth falsehood, nor falsehood truth. Law moves on its majestic course irresistible. If his chosen son violates law and throws himself from the pinnacle he dies.

2.

FREE FROM THE LAW.

THE law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.—Gal. iii, 24, 25.

WHEN we say that a Christian is free from the law, we do not mean that he may break it or not as he likes. We mean that

he is bound to do right by a nobler tie than *you must*.

For whom is law necessary, and how long is it necessary for them? It is necessary for those who feel the inclination to evil; and so long as the inclination remains, so far must a man be under law.

3.

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM.

YE shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.—John viii, 32.

CHRISTIAN liberty is internal. It resides in the deeps of the soul; a soul freed by faith is safe from superstitions. He who fears God will fear nothing else. . . . He alone is free who can use outward things with conscientious freedom as circumstances vary.

4.

AN OATH.

LET your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.—Matt. v, 37.

THE third commandment is commonly quoted as prohibiting blasphemy and cursing; but originally it had nothing to do with this. To take the name of God in vain

was to use it in asseveration, to call God to witness; and then, by breaking the oath, to make that invocation vain or void, and then render the name of God a worthless and frivolous thing. . . . Under the Jewish law, if a man was put upon his oath by the priest, he was bound to utter truth, under tremendous penalties. . . . It was in obedience to this law that Christ responded to the high priest's question. At first he held his peace, but when "adjured by the living God" to say if he were the Son of God, he immediately replied, "I am."

5.

GIFTS.

FOLLOW after charity, and desire spiritual gifts.—I Cor. xiv, 1.

A GIFT is that in which our main strength lies.

The apostle bids the Corinthians undervalue gifts in comparison with graces: as gifts are not ourselves, but our accidents, like property, ancestors, birth, or position in the world.

6.

GRACE.

GOD is able to make all grace abound toward you ; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.—2 Cor. ix, 8.

A GRACE is that which has in it some moral quality ; whereas a gift does not necessarily share in this. . . . Graces are what a man *is* ; but enumerate his gifts, and you will only know what he *has*.

7.

FAITH.

FAITH is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.—Heb. xi, 1.

FAITH is the conviction, “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.” Faith is trust—in the midst of the perplexities of evil to feel sure that all is right, to believe that partial evil is universal good.

Faith is trust. Trust is dependence on another ; the spirit which is opposite to independence or trust in self. Hence, where the spirit of proud independence is, faith is not.

It matters not *how* faith comes, whether through the heart, as in the case of John, or through the intellect, as in the case of Thomas,

or as the result of long education, as in the case of Peter, . . . that blessed thing which the Bible calls faith is a *state* of the soul.

The *life* is the test of faith. Faith produces faith. If you want to convince men, and ask how you shall do it, we reply, Believe with all your heart and soul, and some soul will be surely kindled by your flame.

8.

SAVING FAITH.

THE eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.—Acts viii, 36, 37.

PAUL says, Works, mere acts, are not enough to justify us, because they are limited and imperfect. Ten thousand, a million, cannot, because even a million is a limited number. Nothing justifies but faith, for faith is infinite and immeasurable like a fountain. True, replies James. But then do not think that Paul means to say that a living fount of faith will be barren without works. The faith which saves is “a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

9.

FAITH THAT IS DEAD.

FAITH, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.—James ii, 17.

SUPPOSE I say, “A tree cannot be struck without thunder;” that is true, for there is never destructive lightning without thunder. But again, if I say, “The tree was struck by lightning without thunder,” that is true, too, if I mean that the lightning alone struck the tree, without the thunder striking it. Yet read the two assertions together, and they seem contradictory. So in the same way Paul says, “Faith justifies without works,” that is, faith *only* is that which justifies us, not works. But James says, “Not a faith which is without works.” There will be works with faith, as there is thunder with lightning. . . . Put it in one sentence: *Faith alone justifies; but not the faith which is alone. . . .* The life of God in the soul *must* spring up with acts; for to say that it does not would be to say that it is dead.

10.

TRUST.

THE Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.—Nahum i, 7.

IT is not belief *about* Christ, but personal trust *in* the Christ of God that saves the soul.

11.

VIRTUE.

UNTO the pure all things are pure.—Titus i, 15.

IT is a foolish question to ask, Will the true, pure, loving, holy man be saved? He *is* saved; he *has* heaven; it is in him now—an earnest of more hereafter.

12.

CHASTITY.

WHO can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.—Prov. xxxi, 10.

THERE was a fire in Rome called eternal, forever replenished. It was the type and symbol of the duration of the republic. This fire was tended by the vestals—a beautifully significant institution. It implied that the duration of Rome was coextensive with the preservation of her purity of morals. So long as the dignity of her matrons and her virgins remained unsullied, so long she would last; no longer. Female chastity guarded the Eternal City. . . . The Roman was conspicuous for the virtues of this earth—honor, fidelity, courage, chastity, all manliness.

13.

TONGUES.

I THANK my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.—1 Cor. xiv, 18, 19.

WE gather first that the “tongues” were inarticulate or incoherent. Man spoke “not unto men, but unto God.” What is this but that rapt, ecstatic outpouring of unutterable feeling, for which language is insufficient and poor, in which a man is not trying to make himself logically clear to men, but pouring out his soul to God?

Again, in 1 Cor. xiv, 4: “He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself.” Here we find that this gift is something internal, a kind of inspired and impassioned soliloquy, or it may be meditation uttered aloud. . . . Once again, in the seventh and eighth verses, . . . the apostle proceeds to compare the gifts of tongues with the unworded and inarticulate sounds of musical instruments. These *have* a meaning. Paul does not say they have none, but he says that, not being definite, they are

unintelligible, except to a person in sympathy with the same mood of feeling. . . . And although they *have* a meaning, it is one which is *felt* rather than measured by the intellect. . . . Lastly, let us consider the eleventh verse. . . . Here the gift is compared to a barbarian tongue, to a man speaking what the hearer knew not. Therefore we see that it is *not a barbarian tongue* itself which is here intended, but merely that the indefinable language uttered is *likened* to one.

14.

TONGUES MAY BE UNDERSTOOD.

LET him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.—I Cor. xiv, 13.

[T is a great principle that all the deeper feelings can only be comprehended by one who is in the same state of feeling as the person who utters or attempts to utter them. Sympathy is the only condition for interpretation of feeling. . . . There must be “music in the soul” as the condition of understanding harmony; to him who has not this, the *language* of music is simply unintelligible.

15.

PROPHECY.

HE that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.—I Cor. xiv, 3.

IN these days, when we use the word prophet, we mean it almost always to signify a predictor of future events. But in the Old Testament it has this meaning only *sometimes*, while in the New Testament *generally* it has not this interpretation. A prophet was one commissioned to declare the will of God—a revealer of truth; it might be of facts future, or the far higher truth of the meaning of facts present.

16.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

JESUS saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.—John xiv, 6.

“TO this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” Truth is used here in a sense equivalent to reality; for “truth” substitute “reality” and it will become more intelligible.

The deep glances into truth are got by love.

Love a man ; that is the best way of understanding him. Feel a truth ; that is the only way of comprehending it.

The way of reaching truth is by obeying the truth you know. "If any man will do His will he shall know."

(See PILATE, April 11.)

17.

TO WITNESS TO THE TRUTH.

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.—John xviii, 37.

A MAN cannot create truth, he can only bear witness to it; he has no proud right of private judgment, he can only listen and report that which is in the universe. . . . Each man in his vocation is in the world to do this ; as truly as it was said by Christ may it be said by each of us, . . . "To this end was I born."

A lady with whom he [Mr. Robertson] was slightly acquainted assailed him for "heterodox opinions," and menaced him with the consequence which in this world and the next would follow on the course of action he was pursuing. His only answer was. "I don't

care.” “Do you know what don't care came to, sir?” “Yes, madam,” was the grave reply, “He was crucified on Calvary.”

18.

TRUTHFULNESS AND VERACITY.

THE law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.—John i, 17.

VERACITY implies a correspondence between words and thoughts; truthfulness a correspondence between thoughts and realities. To be veracious it is only necessary that a man give utterance to his convictions; to be true, it is needful that his convictions have affinity with fact. . . . If a man speak a careless slander against another, believing it, he has not sinned against veracity; but the carelessness which led him into so grave an error effectually bars his claim to clear truthfulness.

19.

SPIRITUAL WISDOM.

THE fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.—Job xxviii, 28.

THE condition of spiritual wisdom and certainty in truth is obedience to the will of God, surrender of private will.

Wisdom is of the heart rather than the intellect; the harvest of moral thoughtfulness, patiently reaped in through years. Two things are required—earnestness and love. . . . The truth is, it is not the amount which is poured in that gives wisdom; but the amount of creative mind and heart working on and stirred by what is poured in.

20.

REVERENCE.

AND he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.—Exod. iii, 5.

YOU degrade *that* loneliness by your compassion. Compassion! Compassion for Him! Adore if you will—respect and reverence that sublime solitariness with which none but the Father was—but no pity; let it draw out the firmer and manlier graces of the soul. Even tender sympathy seems out of place.

21.

AFFECTION.

SET your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.—Col. iii, 2.

THE highest moment known on earth by the mere natural is that in which the mysterious union of heart with heart is felt. Call it

what you will—friendship—love— . . . Yet human love is but the faint type of that surpassing blessedness which belongs to those who love God.

Affections are never deepened and refined until the possibility of loss is felt.

Those on whom our affections have been lavished pass away; they die, but behind them is left the unburied power of love; and we find at last that we have been here in training for the love that knows neither age nor sex nor individuality.

22.

ENSITIVENESS.

BEHOLD, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.—Lam. i, 12.

WE wound men by our looks and our abrupt expressions without intending it; because we have not been taught the delicacy and the tact and the gentleness which can only be learned by the wounding of our own sensibilities.

I do not understand why the tenderer the heart is, the more it is exposed to be torn and rent and tortured.

23.

THE OBJECT OF LOVE.

JESUS said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.—Matt. xxii, 37, 38.

THE highest form of love is communion with God. Love excites the profoundest life of man, and each lower degree of love prepares the way for one which is higher. The love of God is the end of all, and I suppose that all must drop off, leaf by leaf, till that fruit is matured.

24.

LOVE OF THE WORLD.

REJOICE not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth.—Prov. xxiv, 17.

IMPURE love is only a form of hate and cruelty, and easily passes into them. There is nourishment enough in the ground for thorns, and enough for wheat; but not enough in any ground for both wheat and thorns. The agriculturist thins his nursery ground and the farmer weeds his fields, in order that the dissipated sap may be concentrated in a few plants vigorously. . . . Love dissipated on many objects concentrates itself on none. God or the world—not both.

25.

LOVE OF PARENTS.

CHILDREN, obey your parents in all things : for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.—Col. iii, 20, 21.

IT is in vain for a man in his dying hour, who has loved no man individually, to attempt to love the human race ; everything here must be done by degrees. Love is a habit. God has given us the love of relatives and friends, the love of father and mother, brother, sister, friend, to prepare us gradually for the love of God. . . . The domestic affections are the alphabet of love.

26.

LOVE OF GOD.

HE that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.—John xiv, 21.

GOD is a Character. To love God is to love his character. For instance, God is Purity. And to be pure in thought and look, to turn away from unhallowed books and conversation, to abhor the moment in which we have not been pure, is to love God.

The love of God is the full-blown flower of which the love of man is the bud. To love man is to love God. To do good to man will be recognized hereafter as doing good to Christ.

He has loved us, God knows why—I do not—and we all, unworthy though we be, respond faintly to that love, and try to be what he would have us. Therefore, come what may, hold fast to love. Though men should rend your heart, let them not embitter or harden it.

27.

CHARITY.

ABOVE all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.—
1 Peter iv, 8.

CHARITY hides out of sight, and refuses to contemplate a multitude of sins which malevolence would delight to see. It throws a veil over them and covers them. . . . There are three ways at least in which love covers sin: 1. In refusing to see small faults. . . . 2. By making large allowances. . . . 3. Lastly, charity can tolerate even intolerance.

28.

MODESTY.

THIS is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.—1 Tim. i, 15.

TRUE Christian modesty is not the being ignorant of what we are, neither does it consist in affecting ignorance. . . . If a man is falsely charged with theft, there is no vanity in his indignantly asserting that he has been honest all his life long. Christian modesty consists rather in this—in having set before us a sublime standard of what is right and great and pure and good, so that we feel how far we are from attaining to that. . . . It is in placing before us ever the sublime, unapproachable standard of Christ.

Modesty is seldom the attribute of the untried. Modesty is a thing we learn generally by shame and failure. A young Christian is ambitious to distinguish himself as a saint at once. It is the aged saint who counts it an honor if he be permitted “with shame to take the lowest place.”

29.

MEEKNESS.

TAKE my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls.—Matt. xi, 29.

HUMBLENESS is peculiar to Christianity. Goodness is admired and taught in all religions. But to be good, and feel that your good is nothing ; to advance, and become more conscious of pollution ; to ripen in all excellence, and like corn to bend the head when full of ripe, bursting grain—that is Christianity.

30.

RIGHTEOUSNESS.

IF ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye : and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.—1 Peter iii, 14.

REAL righteousness, what is it? In one word, it is surrender to the will of God. O, that I could breathe the spirit of Him who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, threatened not ! For in his case all was undeserved ; but I cannot tell how much, in my case, rashness and pride have irritated people.

31.

UNWORLDLINESS.

SEEING then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?—2 Peter iii, 11.

UNWORLDLINESS is the spirit of holding all things as not our own, in the perpetual conviction that they will not last. It is not to put life and God's lovely world aside with self-torturing hand. It is to have the world, and not to let the world have you; to be its master and not its slave. To have Christ hidden in the heart, calming all.

NOVEMBER.

DAILY THOUGHTS.

	NOV.
Forgetting Self.....	I
As God Sees Us.....	2
Germes of Evil.....	3
Trials.....	4
Thorn in the Flesh.....	5
Our Great Want.....	6
Dissatisfaction.....	7
Unrest.....	8
Struggling Up to God.....	9
The Rest of the World.....	10
The Rest of God.....	11
A Religious Life.....	12
What is Sanctification?.....	13
Sanctification the Aim of Life.....	14
What is Perfection?.....	15
Perfection the Christian's Aim.....	16
Holiness.....	17
The Holy of Holies.....	18
Visions.....	19
Unutterable Things.....	20
The Secret of the Lord.....	21
Thoughts of God.....	22
Thoughts of Heaven.....	23
How to Overcome Evil Thoughts.....	24
Reverie.....	25
Meditation.....	26
Joy.....	27
Peace, How Obtained.....	28
Peace of God.....	29
Hope.....	30

1.

FORGETTING SELF.

HE must increase, but I must decrease.—John iii, 30.

IN any work which is to live or be really beautiful there must be the spirit of the Cross. That which is to be a temple to God must never have the marble polluted with the name of the architect or builder. There can be no real success, except when a man has ceased to think of his own salvation.

2.

AS GOD SEES US.

WHAT is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me.—I Sam. iii, 17.

IF we saw ourselves as God sees us, we should be willing to be anywhere, to be silent when others speak, to be passed by in the world's crowd and thrust aside to make way for others. . . . This is the meek and quiet spirit, and this is the temper of the humble with whom the high and lofty One dwells.

3.

GERMS OF EVIL.

IF the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?—I Peter iv, 18.

IN our best estate and in our purest moments there is a something of the devil in us, which, if it could be known, would make men shrink from us all. In our deepest degradation there

remains something sacred, undefiled, the pledge and gift of our better nature; a germ of indestructible life, like grains of wheat among the cerements of a mummy surviving through three thousand years, which *may* be planted and live and grow again.

4.

TRIALS.

ABOVE all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.—Eph. vi, 16, 17.

TRIALS do not become lighter as we go on. . . . What! no repose? . . . No; harder and yet harder trials. For the Christian soldier there is no rest except in the grave.

Let a man conquer, and fresh trials will open and fresh victories will ensue. Trials will assail us where we are most vulnerable. Everywhere, head and heart and heel. We must dismiss, therefore, the thought that we can ever put off the armor.

5.

THORN IN THE FLESH.

HE said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.—2 Cor. xii, 9.

THERE is more than one person in this congregation who feels, as I am speaking, that he has a thorn. . . . It may be indolence; he may

be haunted by dangerous reverie ; he may have evil thoughts tempting him continually to sin. My Christian brother, none knows but God how you have struggled with these thoughts, how you have battled with them on your knees, till they have seemed to rise up against you as a living, personal enemy. And yet take courage, my brother; be sure of this, His grace is sufficient for thee.

6.

OUR GREAT WANT.

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.—Psalm xlii, 1.

IF you search down into the constitution of your being till you come to the lowest deep of all, underlying all other wants you will find a craving for what is infinite—a something that desires perfection, a wish that nothing but the thought of that which is eternal can satisfy.

7.

DISSATISFACTION.

YE have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.—Heb. x, 36, 37.

ONE reason, at least, why men pass through this world chafing, fretful, and dissatisfied with their lot in life, is just this: they have

formed an overweening estimate of self, and they find that neither God nor man treats them as they think they deserve.

8.

UNREST.

O THAT I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.—Psalm lv, 6.

A POND may be without a ripple; as to the troubled sea, just because it is vast, it cannot rest. And so it is with the soul of man. It is its own magnificence that makes it intensely miserable. . . . Rest! Why man's soul rocks and billows itself with an eternity beneath it.

When we are content to stand, as it were, unclothed before God, without one claim upon him except the righteousness of Christ, there is one step made toward peace, and then our hot, swelling hearts may find rest.

9.

STRUGGLING UP TO GOD.

AND he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.—Gen. xxxii, 26.

TO get safe through to-morrow? No, no, no! To be blessed by God—to know him, and what he is—that is the battle of

Jacob's soul from sunset till the dawn of day. And this is our struggle—*the* struggle. . . . Out of our frail and yet sublime humanity the demand that rises in the earthlier hours of our religion may be this, "Save my soul;" but in the most unearthly moments it is this, "Tell me thy name." We move through a world of mystery, and the deepest question is, What is the being that is ever near, sometimes felt, never seen—that which has haunted us from childhood with a dream of something surpassingly fair, which has never yet been realized—that which sweeps through the soul at times as a desolation, like the blast from the wings of the angel of death, leaving us stricken and silent in our loneliness—that which has touched us in our tenderest point, and the flesh has quivered with agony, and our mortal affections have shriveled up with pain—that which comes to us in aspirations of nobleness? Shall we say It or He? What is It? Who is He? Those anticipations of immortality and God, what are they? . . . Shall I call them God, Father, Spirit, Love? A living being within me or outside me? Tell me thy name, thou awful mystery of Loveliness! This is the struggle of all earnest life.

10.

THE REST OF THE WORLD.

COME unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—Matt. xi, 28.

IF there was nothing else to make men wretched, uncertainty respecting their future destinies would be enough. . . . There is no *peace*, there is no *rest* in the prospect of eternity, unless there is something very much more than a guess that God is loving us.

There is an eternal law that man cannot be happy except in keeping God's commandments.

11.

THE REST OF GOD.

THERE remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.—Heb. iv, 9.

EXPERIENCE tells us, after a trial, that those Sundays are the happiest, the purest, the most rich in blessing, in which the spiritual part has been most attended to; those in which, as in the temple of Solomon, the sound of the earthly hammer has not been heard in the temple of the soul.

The world proposes a rest by the removal of a burden. The Redeemer gives rest by giving us the spirit and power to bear the burden.

Christ does not promise a rest of inaction, neither that the thorns shall be converted into roses, nor that the trials of life shall be removed. . . . It is not the lake locked in ice that suggests repose, but the river moving on calmly and rapidly in silent majesty and strength. It is not the cattle lying in the sun, but the eagle cleaving the air with fixed pinions, that gives you the idea of repose combined with strength and motion. In creation the rest of God is exhibited as a sense of power which nothing wearies.

12.

A RELIGIOUS LIFE.

WHAT doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?—Micah vi, 8.

TO be religious is to feel that God is the Ever Near. It is to go through life with this thought coming instinctively and unbidden, "Thou God seest me." A life of religion is a life of faith; and faith is that strange faculty by which man feels the presence of the Invisible.

13.

WHAT IS SANCTIFICATION?

FOR their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.—John xvii, 19.

THE priest touched with the typical blood of a sacrificed animal the Levite's right hand, right eye, right foot. This was the Levite's sanctification. It devoted every faculty and every power of seeing, doing, walking, the right-hand faculties—the best and choicest—to God's peculiar service.

“For their sakes I sanctify”—that is, devote—“myself.” . . . This sanctification is spoken of here chiefly as threefold: Self-devotion by inward resolve, self-devotion to the truth, self-devotion for the sake of others.

The true meaning of to “sanctify” is to set apart, and hence to consecrate to any work. Thus spoke Christ: “For their sakes I sanctify,” set apart, devote “myself.”

14.

SANCTIFICATION THE AIM OF LIFE.

THIS is the will of God, even your sanctification.—
1 Thess. iv, 3.

IF we would be sanctified from the world when Christ comes we must be found, not stripping off the ornaments from our persons,

but the censoriousness from our tongues and the selfishness from our hearts. . . . He is sanctified who has, . . . in his Master's words, "a well of water *in* him, springing up into everlasting life," keeping his life on the whole pure, and his heart fresh. His true life is hid with Christ in God. His motives, the aims and objects of his life, however inconsistent they may be with each other, however irregularly or feebly carried out, are yet on the whole above, not here. His citizenship is in heaven.

15.

WHAT IS PERFECTION?

NOT as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.—Phil. iii, 12.

FAULTLESSNESS is conceivable, being merely the negation of evil. But perfection is positive, the attainment of all conceivable excellence. It is as long as eternity—expansive as God. Perfection is our mark; yet, . . . even to the dying hour, it will be but this: "I count not myself to have apprehended."

The young ruler . . . asked for perfection:

“What lack I yet?” And then there was nothing left but to say: “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow me.” For observe “strong meat” does not mean high doctrine, such as election, regeneration, justification by faith, but “perfection”—strong demands on self, a severe, noble life.

16.

PERFECTION THE CHRISTIAN'S AIM.

LEAVING the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.—Heb. vi, 1.

HAPPINESS is *not* our being's end and aim. The Christian's aim is perfection, not happiness, and every one of the sons of God must have something of that spirit which marked their Master; that holy sadness, that peculiar unrest, which belongs to a spirit which strives after heights to which it can never attain.

Paul says, It is your nature not to sin; you are not the child of the devil, but the child of God.

17.

HOLINESS

SEEING then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?—2 Peter iii, 11.

THE man of virtue walks in firmness, resting on the law which he has fulfilled; while the man of saintliness walks humbly, meekly, lowly, as beneath the infinite heaven of duty that arches overhead.

Let the distinction be drawn between the life of holiness and the life of mere blamelessness. Blamelessness and accuracy are beautiful to look upon, but they do not save the soul.

Feel the powers of the world to come; that is the secret of keeping oneself unspotted from the world.

18.

THE HOLY OF HOLIES.

UNTO thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.—Psalm xxv, 1.

THE value of the public reading of the Psalms in our service is, that they express for us indirectly those deeper feelings which there would be a sense of indelicacy in expressing directly. . . . There are feelings of

which we do not speak to each other; they are too sacred and too delicate. Such are most of our feelings to God. If we do speak of them, they lose their fragrance, become coarse; nay, there is even a sense of indelicacy and exposure.

19.

VISIONS.

I WILL pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.— Joel ii, 28.

MANY of Paul's visions were when he was "fasting," at times when the body is not predominant in our humanity. For "fulness of bread" and abundance of idleness are not the conditions in which we can see the things of God. Again, most of these revelations were made to him in the midst of *trial*. In prison at Philippi, during the shipwreck, while "the thorn was in his flesh," then it was the vision of unutterable things was granted to him, and the vision of God in his clearness came. This was the experience of Christ himself. God does not lavish his choicest gifts, but reserves them. . . . Yet, though inspiration is granted in its *fullness* only to rare,

choice spirits like Paul, we must remember that in *degree* it belongs to all Christian experience. There have been moments, surely, in our experience, when the vision of God was clear. They were not, I will venture to say, moments of fullness or success or triumph. In some season of desertion, you have, in solitary longing, seen the sky ladder as Jacob saw of old, and felt heaven open even to *you*; or, in childish purity, heard a voice as Samuel did; . . . or, in prayer, you have been conscious of more than earth present in the silence, and a hand in yours, and a voice that you could hear, and you could almost feel the eternal breath upon your brow.

20.

UNUTTERABLE THINGS.

EYE hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.—1 Cor. ii, 9.

THERE are transfiguration moments, bridal hours of the soul; and not easily forgiven are those who would utter the secrets of its high intercourse with its Lord. There is a certain spiritual indelicacy in persons who cannot perceive that not everything which is a matter of

experience and knowledge is therefore a subject for conversation. You cannot discuss such subjects without vulgarizing them. The things of heaven are too high to be expressed in words of earth.

21.

THE SECRET OF THE LORD.

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.—Rev. ii, 17.

GOD dwells in the thick darkness. Silence knows more of him than speech. His name is secret; therefore beware how you profane his stillness. The *secret* of the Lord is with them that fear him, and is felt by dwelling with God, by thinking of God more than by talking of him.

22.

THOUGHTS OF GOD.

AND Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.—Gen. xxxii, 29.

TO know all about God is one thing; to know the living God is another The name of God—feel him more and more—all else is but empty words.

There is a Spirit which beareth witness with our spirits; there is a "Light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world." . . . The thought of your mind, perchance, is the thought of God. To refuse to follow *that* may be to disown God. To take the judgment and conscience of other men to live by, where is the humility of that? . . . Was the fountain from which they drew exhausted for you?

23.

THOUGHTS OF HEAVEN.

AND the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.—Rev. xxi, 23.

HE who endeavors to be humble and holy and perfect, in order to win heaven, has only a counterfeit religion. God for his own sake—goodness because it is good; truth because it is lovely—this is the Christian's aim. With this limitation, however, we remark that it is a Christian's duty to dwell much more on the thought of future blessedness than most men do. If ever the apostle's step began to flag, the radiant diadem before him gave new vigor to his heart, and we know how at the close of his career the vision

became more vivid. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory." It is our privilege, if we are on our way to God, to keep steadily before us the thought of home. Make it a matter of habit. Force yourself at night, alone, in the midst of the world's bright sights, to pause to think of the heaven which is yours. Let it calm you and ennoble you, and give you cheerfulness to endure.

24.

HOW TO OVERCOME EVIL THOUGHTS.

FINALLY, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.—Phil. iv, 8.

HOW shall we avoid evil thoughts? First, by the fear of God—an awful thought! a living God, infinitely pure, is conscious of your contaminated thoughts! . . . Love and hope will keep us strong against passion, as they kept our Saviour strong in suffering, "who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." Secondly, by the promises of God. Think of

what you are—a child of God, an heir of heaven. Realize the grandeur of saintliness, and you will shrink from degrading your soul and debasing your spirit. It is in reading saintly lives that we are ashamed of groveling desires. . . . Seek exercise and occupation, . . . commit to memory passages of Scripture. Let him store his mind with these as safeguards. Let these be to him the sword, turning everywhere to keep the way of the Garden of Life from the intrusion of profaner footsteps.

25.

REVERIE.

HE went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?—Matt. xx, 6.

SOMETIMES we sit in a kind of day dream, the mind expatiating far away into vacancy, while minutes and hours slip by almost unmarked, in mere vacuity. This is not meditation, but reverie—a state to which the soul resigns itself in pure passivity. When the soul is absent and dreaming, let no man think that that is spiritual meditation, or anything that is spiritual.

26.

MEDITATION.

WHEN I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee : thy right hand upholdeth me.—Psalm lxiii, 6, 7, 8.

MEDITATION is partly a passive, partly an active state. Whoever has pondered long over a plan which he is anxious to accomplish, without distinctly seeing at first the way, knows what meditation is. . . . He knows what it is who has ever earnestly and sincerely loved one living human being. The image of his friend rises unbidden by day and night, . . . mixes its presence with his every plan. So far all is passive. But besides this he plans and contrives for that other's happiness. . . . This is meditation.

27.

JOY.

THESE things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.—John xv, 11.

IF we sin we must be miserable ; but if we be God's own that misery will not last long ; the evidence is lost only for a time, but

I do feel sure it is lost. But God's promise is so clear—"Sin shall not have dominion over you"—that the evidence must become bright again by victory.

28.

PEACE, HOW OBTAINED.

PEACE I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. —John xiv, 27.

PEACE is that state in which there is no misery, no remorse, no sting. And there are but three things which can break that peace. The first is discord between the mind of man and the lot which he is called on to inherit; the second is discord between the affections and powers of the soul; and the third is doubt of the rectitude and justice and love wherewith this world is ordered.

The man who has not peace in himself cannot get peace from circumstances.

There is no thrill of pure peace; that is impossible to you, if only you have placed yourself in earnest under the discipline of Christ.

29.

THE PEACE OF GOD.

AND he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.—Luke xv, 31.

THE peace of men who have been religious from childhood is a very different thing from the keen luxury that attends the return of a prodigal son, but it is the best on the whole. It has more of heaven's deep tranquillity. It has more of childlike intimacy with God. The deepest peace is scarcely conscious of its own peacefulness. "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." . . . The peace of him that has lived near to God is like the quiet, steady luster of the lighthouse lamp, startling no one, ever to be found when wanted, casting the same mild ray through the long night across the maddest billows that curl their crests around the rock on which it stands.

30.

HOPE.

EVERY man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.—I John iii, 3.

LOVE and hope will keep us strong against passion, as they kept our Saviour strong in suffering, "who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame."

DECEMBER.

DAILY THOUGHTS.

	DEC.
The Hour of Death.....	I
The Death of the Christian.....	2
The Death of the Sinner.....	3
The Grave.....	4
Affinity.....	5
Hell	6
Heaven.....	7
Comfort in Bereavement.....	8
Jesus is Coming Again.....	9
Preparation for Christ's Return.....	10
First Argument for a Resurrection	11
Second Argument for a Resurrection.....	12
Third Argument for a Resurrection.....	13
Fourth Argument for a Resurrection.....	14
Fifth Argument for a Resurrection.....	15
Sixth Argument for a Resurrection.....	16
First Principle of the Resurrection.....	17
Second Principle of the Resurrection.....	18
Third Principle of the Resurrection.....	19
The Heart's Yearning after Immortality.....	20
Christ's Kingdom.....	21
The Reign of the Saints.....	22
Spiritual Rewards.....	23
Doing Good for the Eternal Reward.....	24
Merit.....	25
Degrees of Glory.....	26
Degrees of Glory.....	27
The Harvest.....	28
Eternity.....	29
"The Measure of My Days".....	30
It is Finished.....	31

1.

THE HOUR OF DEATH.

BE thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.—Rev. ii, 10.

I SOMETIMES shudder when I awake, as it were, for a moment, to remember that while we are dallying the wheels of the chariot of the Judge do not tarry too, but are hurrying on with what will be to some among us fearful rapidity.

Be sure that in a dying hour the questions will narrow into a very few: God, eternity, the soul, judgment, and the cross.

2.

THE DEATH OF THE CHRISTIAN.

PRECIOUS in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.—Psalm cxvi, 15.

A CHRISTIAN conqueror dies calmly. Brave men in battle do not boast that they are not afraid. Courage is so natural to them that they are not conscious they are doing anything out of the common way—Christian bravery is a deep, calm thing, unconscious of itself. There are more triumphant deathbeds than we count, if we only remember this—true fearlessness makes no parade.

It is one thing to meet death intrepidly, and it is altogether another to meet it peacefully and trustfully.

He who has lived with Christ will find Christ near in death.

We are conquerors of death when we are able to look beyond it.

3.

THE DEATH OF THE SINNER.

SAY unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live : turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?—Ezek. xxxiii, 11.

I CAN conceive no dying hour more awful than that of one who has aspired to *know* instead of to *love*, and finds himself at last amid a world of barren facts and lifeless theories, loving none and adoring nothing.

4.

THE GRAVE.

HE that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still : and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still : and he that is holy, let him be holy still.—Rev. xxii, 11.

HAVE you ever marked that striking fact, the connection of the successive stages of the soul? How sin can change the coun-

tenance, undermine the health, produce restlessness? Think you the grave will end all that—that by some magic change the moral being shall be buried there, and the soul rise again so changed in every feeling that the very identity of being would be lost, and it would amount to the creation of a new soul? Say you that God is love? O, but look round this world! The aspect of things is stern—very stern. If they be ruled by love, it is a love which does not shrink from human agony. There is a law of infinite mercy here, but there is a law of boundless rigor too. Sin, and you will suffer; that law is not reversed.

5.

AFFINITY.

AND I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.—John xii, 32.

ON sympathy the final awards of heaven and hell are built; attraction and repulsion, the law of the magnet. To each pole, all that has affinity with itself; *to* Christ, all that is Christlike; *from* Christ, all that is not Christlike, forever and forever. Eternal judgment is nothing more than the carrying out of these words, “I know my sheep;” for the adverse of them is, “I never knew *you*; depart from me, all ye that work iniquity.’

6.

HELL.

CAST ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.—Matt. xxv, 30.

IT is not the dread of hell that makes men miserable. There is an eternal law that man cannot be happy except in keeping God's commandments. Make a man sure of heaven, and leave him with a soul not reduced to harmony, not humble, not pure, not obedient, he is a wretch still. . . . What is misery? It is the boundless law of duty written on the heart, and the accumulated self-reproach of not obeying it.

An unforgiving, vindictive heart *is* in hell. How can it be saved? It *is* "delivered to the tormenters."

It only needs that the body which buries recollections for a time shall be dissolved, and then there begins the eternity of a hell of recollections, when every act of bygone guilt which has not been sunk in the blood of Christ shall be as fresh and vivid before a sinner's eyes as it was at the moment when it was committed.

7.

HEAVEN.

GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.--Rev. xxi 4.

A MAN who is filled with one idea, repeating it, is looked upon as a dreamer, an enthusiast. People smile when they hear his project, as a kind of monomania. If we ask what was the expression most frequent on our Redeemer's lips, the answer is, "The kingdom of God." . . . So the repetition of "kingdom of heaven" became at last ludicrous in the ears of the Pharisees.

Heaven must be a state . . . of internal happiness. But there will also be external objects ; for we read of floods of melody from everlasting harps, of temples of gorgeous magnificence.

John gave two characteristics of our future destiny : resemblance to God—"We shall be like him ;" and a clearer vision of him—"We shall see him as he is."

8.

COMFORT IN BEREAVEMENT.

THE world passeth away, and the lust thereof : but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.—I John ii, 17.

AFTER a moment of bitterness almost the very first thought that rose on my heart was, His work is done, and done well ; and I felt

roused and invigorated, instead of depressed, by the remembrance that we have a work to do, and the night cometh, when no man can work. . . . What soothing, ennobling recollections yours will be when the first stunning sensation is over! We need such recollections to nerve and brace us for our work. Struggling, battling, conquering, and those who have passed into eternity looking on—the cloud of witnesses. I, too, have just lost a dear one, and we weep together; but one feeling must be uppermost with us both, that we have deliberately chosen the cross for our portion, and it is no marvel if some of its blood is sprinkled on us.

9.

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN.

THE dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.—1 Thess. iv, 16, 17.

THE coming of Christ includes the perfect state of human society. Not hereafter, in a world beyond, but here—the coming of Christ to *us*, not our going to him. And the perfect attitude is to be looking forward to this. . . . Patiently, humbly, watchfully waiting for that which shall come.

There are three advents : First, in the flesh, which is past ; the second, in the spirit ; the third, his judgment advent.

10.

PREPARATION FOR CHRIST'S RETURN.

TAKE ye heed, watch and pray : for ye know not when the time is.—Mark xiii, 33.

THE true preparation is not having correct ideas of how and when he shall come, but being like him. “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.”

The apostle says, “So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord,” as though that were the best gift of all; as if that attitude of expectation were the highest that can be attained here by the Christian. It implies a patient, humble spirit, one that is waiting for, one that is looking forward to something nobler and better.

When Christ comes we must be found not stripping off the ornaments from our persons, but the censoriousness from our tongues and selfishness from our hearts.

11.

FIRST ARGUMENT FOR A RESURRECTION.

IF, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son ; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.—Rom. v, 10.

WE do not believe that there shall be a life to come merely because there is something within us which craves for it, but because we have believed in the life and death and resurrection of the Man of Nazareth, . . . for those truths which you hold deepest you have gained not by the illumination of your own intellect, but you have reached them first by trusting in some great or good one, and then, through him, by obtaining credible evidence of those truths.

12.

SECOND ARGUMENT FOR A RESURRECTION.

IF there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen.—I Cor. xv, 13.

THE second line of argument used by the apostle . . . is known among logicians by the name of the *reductio ad absurdum*, when a man can show, not so much that his own opinions are true, as that all others which contradict them are false and end in a monstrous absurdity. . . . The apostle contemplates Jesus Christ

for a moment simply as a mortal man; and he says it is an absurdity to believe that *that* man perished. . . . The Sadducees denied the possibility of *a* resurrection; the Pharisees denied the possibility of *his* resurrection. Now, if Christ be not risen, argued the apostle, you are driven to the monstrous supposition that the Pharisees and Sadducees were right, and the Son of man was wrong; . . . you are driven to the supposition that when he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," God's reply to that prayer was "Annihilation," that He who had made his life one perpetual act of consecration to his Father's service received the same fate as the blaspheming malefactor.

13.

THIRD ARGUMENT FOR A RESURRECTION.

IF Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.—I Cor. xv, 17.

WHAT he here implies is that the Christian faith, in such a case, must have failed in redeeming man from sin. For he assumes that, except in the belief of the resurrection, the quitting of sin and the rising in mastery over the flesh and its desires is utterly impossible to man. . . . It is more life, and fuller, that we want.

14.

FOURTH ARGUMENT FOR A RESURRECTION.

IF Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.—I Cor. xv, 14, 15.

THERE was no mistake. It was either true or it was a falsehood. The resurrection of Christ was or it was not a matter of fact; James, Cephas, the twelve, the five hundred, either had or had not seen the Lord Jesus; Thomas either had or had not put his finger into the print of the nails; either the resurrection was a fact, or else it followed with the certainty of demonstration that the apostles were intentionally false witnesses before God.

15.

FIFTH ARGUMENT FOR A RESURRECTION.

IF Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.—I Cor. xv, 17, 18.

THE apostle does not say that it is impossible that *man* should perish. It is a favorite argument with many to point to the lofty attainments and irrepressible aspirations of the human soul as a proof of immortality. . . . This is not St. Paul's argument. He does not

speak of the excellence of human nature; it is not from this that he draws his inference and proof of immortality. But it is from this, that if there be no resurrection of the dead, then they "who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished;" in other words, the best, the purest, the noblest of the human race have lived only to die forever. . . . You are required to believe, moreover, that, as they attained to this goodness, purity, and excellence by believing what was false, namely, the resurrection, so it is only by believing what is true that they could arrive at the opposite, that is the selfish and base character. So that we are driven to this strange paradox, that by believing that which is false we become pure and noble, and by believing that which is true we become base and selfish. Believe this, who can? These are the difficulties of infidelity.

16.

SIXTH ARGUMENT FOR A RESURRECTION.

Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.—I Cor. xv, 20.

THE first fruits of the harvest were dedicated to God, whereby he put in his claim for the whole, just as shutting up a road once a year puts in a claim of proprietorship to the right of

way forever. It was thus Paul understood the ceremony. "For if the first fruits be holy, the lump is also holy." Thus when the apostle says that "Christ is the first fruits of them that slept," he implies that part of the harvest has been claimed for God, and therefore that the rest is his too. The resurrection of Christ is a pledge of the resurrection of all who share in his humanity.

17.

FIRST PRINCIPLE OF THE RESURRECTION.

SOME man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God hath given it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.—I Cor. xv, 35-38.

PAUL discerns in the world three principles: First, that life even in its lowest form has the power of assimilating to itself atoms; he takes the corn of wheat which, after being apparently destroyed, rises again, appropriating, as it grows, all that has affinity with itself, such as air and moisture; that body with which it is raised may be called its own body, and yet it is a new body. . . . This does not *prove* the resurrection, but it shows its *probability*.

18.

SECOND PRINCIPLE OF THE RESURRECTION.

THERE are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.—I Cor. xv, 40, 41.

THE second analogy that Paul sees in nature is the marvelous superabundance of the creative power of God. . . . Are we to believe that God has exhausted his creative power, that he has done all that he could have done, and that he could make no new forms? Are we to believe that the wisdom and knowledge which have never been fathomed by the wisest are expended, and that the power of God should be insufficient to find for the glorified spirit a form fit for it?

19.

THIRD PRINCIPLE OF THE RESURRECTION.

THAT was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.—I Cor. xv, 46.

THE third principle which Paul refers to is the principle of progress. . . . The law of God's universe is progress; and just as it was

in creation—first the lower and then the higher—so it is throughout, progressive happiness, progressive knowledge, progressive virtue. . . . At first we lead a mere animal life—the life of instinct; then, as we grow older, passion succeeds; and after the era of passion our spirituality comes, if it comes at all—*after* and not *before*. Paul draws a probability from this, that what our childhood was to our manhood—something imperfect followed by that which is more perfect—so will it be hereafter; our present humanity, with all its majesty, is nothing more than human infancy.

20.

THE HEART'S YEARNING AFTER IMMORTALITY.

WHEN this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.—I Cor. xv, 54.

NO man, in a high mood, ever felt that this life was really all. . . . We find a yearning in our hearts after immortality, and that not in our lowest, but in our highest moods, and when we look around we find the external world corroborating our aspirations. Then how shall we account for this marvelous coincidence? Shall

we believe that those two things point to nothing? Shall we believe, and shall we say, that God our Father has cheated us with a lie? Therefore, Paul concludes his masterly and striking argument: "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

21.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

THY kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.—Matt. vi, 10.

THIS earth shall be one day a kingdom of God. We cannot tell *how* it may be consummated, . . . but this unquestionably is true, human society *shall* be thoroughly Christianized. "The kingdoms of this world *shall* become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ." Legislation *shall* be Christian legislation. And more, a time is coming when statute laws shall cease, and self-government and self-control shall supersede all outward or arbitrary law.

Peter announced the approach of another day of grace and glory, far more blessed and

glorious than any that earth has yet seen. The anticipations of the first were realized in that which is called the first coming of the Redeemer · the anticipations of the second dispensation shall yet be realized in what we call the glories of his second advent. We are led, from 1 Peter i, 10-13, to assume an analogy between the two dispensations: the first did not come without expectation; and according to analogy, we are entitled to expect that neither shall the second come on us without anticipations of its approach.

22.

THE REIGN OF THE SAINTS.

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?
—1 Cor. vi, 2.

[T does not mean that the saints shall be assessors with Christ at the day of judgment, but that they shall rule the world. . . . In *that* kingdom to come goodness shall be the only condition of supremacy. This, then, is the first principle of the kingdom. . . . The second principle is that the best shall rule. The apostles “shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” . . . Take that in the spirit of the passage, and it means, and

typically expresses, that in *that* kingdom the best shall rule. The third principle is that there each shall have his place according to his capacity. In 1 Cor. xii, 28, this is plainly laid down. . . . Men are ministers now who are fit only to plow; men are hidden now in professions where there is no scope for their powers; men who might be fit to hold the rod of empire are now weaving cloth. But it shall all be altered there. I do not promise to say *how* this is to be brought about; I only say the Bible declares it shall be so.

23.

SPIRITUAL REWARDS.

HE which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.—2 Cor. ix, 6.

THE rewards are these: do right, and God's recompense to you will be the power of doing more right. Give, and God's reward to you will be the spirit of giving more; a blessed spirit, for it is the spirit of God himself. Love, and God will pay you with the capacity of more love, for love is God within you.

Reward is life becoming more life. It is the soul developing itself. It is the Holy Spirit

of God in man making itself more consciously with an ever-increasing heaven. You reap what you sow—not something else, but that. An act of love makes the soul more loving. A deed of humbleness deepens humbleness. The thing reaped is the very thing sown, multiplied a hundredfold. You have sown a seed of life, you reap life everlasting.

24.

DOING GOOD FOR THE ETERNAL REWARD.

LOVE ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again ; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest : for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.—Luke vi, 35.

TO do good for reward, the Son of man declares to be the sinner's religion, and he distinctly proclaims that alone to be spiritually good which "does good, hoping for nothing in return." Men give their money, for example, to God ; and because they have *apparently* sown carnal things to God, they expect to reap the same. . . . The fallacy lies in this : the thing sown was *not* money, but spirit. It only *seemed* money, it was in reality the feeling with which it was given which was sown. For example, the poor widow gave two mites, but God took account of *sacrifice*. The sinful woman gave

an alabaster box of ointment, valued at three hundred pence. God valued it as so much *love*. Both these sowed not what they gave, but spiritual seed—one love, the other sacrifice. . . . God will repay them with spiritual coin *in kind*.

25.

MERIT.

AND whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.—Matt. x, 42.

MERIT in this there is none. O, the man who knows the torment of an evil heart, and the man who is striving to use his powers wisely, is not the man to talk of merit in the sight of God! There is no truth more dear to our hearts than this: Not by merit, but by grace, does heaven become ours.

26.

DEGREES OF GLORY.

To sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.—Mark x, 40.

THE Redeemer's merits are the passport for the saint, just as entirely as they are the passport for the penitent. Each has the same

heaven—so far they are equal; but unless each can enjoy that heaven with the same intensity, so far they are not equal. . . . “To sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give.” Did Christ mean to say that he had no authority of his own to give away the glories of heaven? Surely not. “All judgment is committed to him.” The plain meaning was this, . . . there were certain eternal principles in the bosom of the Deity which must guide him in their distribution. John the beloved asked this favor of his Lord, but Christ’s personal love to John could not place him one step above another. . . . Who are they for whom the Father has prepared the special glories of the life to come? They who have borne the sharpest cross are prepared to wear the brightest crown. They who best and most steadily can drain the cup which God shall put into their hands to drink are the spirits destined to sit on his right hand and on his left. Our Master’s question was significant. They asked for honor. He demanded if they were willing to pay the price of honor: Can ye drink of my cup?

27.

DEGREES OF GLORY.

THERE is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; for one star differeth from another star in glory.—I Cor. xv, 41.

I F in heaven there were anything like universal equality it would stand out an exception in God's universe ; it would not be like one of God's plans. Everything we know, everything man ever heard of in God's creation, goes by steps, gradually and smoothing off from the lowest to the highest. The vegetable world slides into the animal world, and you cannot tell where one ends and the other begins. Step by step, from lower organization on to higher, till you come to the division line where instinct borders upon reason, and you cannot for certain draw the boundary. Every spot in which you can trace God at work there has he made degrees. . . . Again and again revolutions have tried to level all differences between man and man ; but in the next generation God's insulted law has vindicated itself. . . . In earth, in matter, and in mind there will be, and there must be, thrones and dominions, with principalities and powers. Now this does not prove that there will be degrees in heaven, but it makes it exceedingly improbable that there will not.

28.

THE HARVEST.

HE said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.—Luke xviii, 29, 30.

THE harvest is life eternal. But eternal life does not simply mean a life that lasts forever. That is the destiny of the *soul*—all souls, bad as well as good. But the bad do not enter into this “eternal life.” It is not simply the duration, but the quality of the life which constitutes its character of eternal. A spirit may live forever, yet not enter into this. And a man may live but five minutes the life of divine benevolence, or desire for perfectness; in those five minutes he has entered into the life which is eternal.

29.

ETERNITY.

THIS is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.—John xvii, 3

TIME is but the succession of ideas, long or short as they are few or many; and eternity, as we use the word, means nothing more than the endlessness of this succession,

The distinction made by religious people between eternity and time is an unthinking one. Eternity seems to me a word expressive of a negation. . . . To my mind and heart the most satisfactory things that have been ever said on the future state are contained in the "In Memoriam" [of Tennyson].

30.

"THE MEASURE OF MY DAYS."

I MUST work the works of him that sent me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work.—
John ix, 4.

TIME is the solemn inheritance to which every man is born heir, who has a life-rent of this world—a little section cut out of eternity and given us to do our work in; an eternity before, an eternity behind; and the small stream between, floating swiftly from one into the vast bosom of the other. The man who has felt with all his soul the significance of time will not be long in learning any lesson that this world has to teach him. Have you ever felt it, my Christian brother? Have you ever realized how your own little streamlet is gliding away, and bearing you along with it toward that awful other world of which all

things here are but the thin shadows. . . . Every day in this world has its work ; and every day as it rises out of eternity keeps putting to each of us the question afresh, What will you do before to-day has sunk into eternity and nothingness again ?

31.

IT IS FINISHED.

I HAVE glorified thee on the earth : I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.—John xvii, 4.

THE way in which our Redeemer contemplated this life was altogether a peculiar one. He looked upon it not as a place of rest or pleasure, but simply, solely as a place of duty. He was here to do his Father's will, not his own ; and therefore, now that life was closed, he looked upon it chiefly as a duty that was fulfilled. . . . Let us each apply this to ourselves. That hour is coming to us all ; indeed it is perhaps *now* come. "It is finished." We are *ever* taking leave of something that will not come back again. We let go, with a pang, portion after portion of our existence. However dreary we may have felt life to be here, yet when that hour comes—the winding up of all things, the last grand rush of darkness on

our spirits, the hour of that awful sudden wrench from all we have ever known or loved, the long farewell to sun, moon, stars, and light—brother men, I ask you this day, and I ask myself, humbly and fearfully, *What* will then be finished? When it is finished, what will it be? Will it be the butterfly existence of pleasure, the mere life of science, a life of uninterrupted sin and selfish gratification, or will it be, “Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do?”



TOPICAL INDEX.

	PAGE
A Hardened Heart.....	152
A Man's Last Chance.....	165
A Minister's Success.....	99
A Personal Devil.....	127
A Religious Life.....	253
Absolution Gives Hope.....	177
Absurd Prayers.....	73
Affection.....	237
Affinity.....	271
Agony of Sin.....	150
All Nature Helps the Good.....	42
Alone.....	192
Amusements.....	124
An Oath.....	226
Anxiety.....	165
Apology.....	167
Art.....	118
As God Sees Us.....	247
Atheism.....	113
Backsliding.....	135
Baptism.....	75
Beauty Should Elevate.....	120
Belief.....	215
Bible Promises.....	91
Bible Threatenings.....	92
Boasting.....	147
Body, Soul, and Spirit.....	60
Born of the Spirit.....	171

	PAGE
Brotherhood.....	198
Can We Absolve?.....	175
Can We Fall From Grace?.....	135
Character.....	59
Characteristics of Children.....	44
Charity.....	241
Chastity.....	231
Children of Light.....	183
Christ, Our Mediator.....	19
Christ, the Son of God.....	20
Christ, the Son of Man.....	19
Christ was Tempted.....	26
Christ Within Us.....	33
Christ's Atonement.....	27
Christ's Daily Life.....	21
Christ's Kingdom.....	283
Christ's Knowledge.....	21
Christ's Love.....	27
Christ's Miracles.....	24
Christ's Resurrected Body.....	30
Christ's Sinlessness.....	25
Christ's Teaching.....	22
Christ's Will.....	25
Christian Freedom.....	226
Christianity.....	72
Circumstances are Sent by God.....	42
Comfort in Bereavement.....	273
Complaining.....	210
Confession.....	166
Conscience.....	64
Contented to Doubt.....	138
Conviction.....	64

	PAGE
Courage.....	185
Creation.....	12
Curses.....	150
Dare to be True.....	186
Deeds.....	220
Degrees of Glory ..	287
Degrees of Glory	289
Delivered from Evil.....	172
Despondency.....	210
Dissatisfaction.....	249
Doing Good for the Eternal Reward.....	286
Doubting the Word of Children.....	45
Doubts of Christians.....	209
Duty.....	216
Early Religion of Children.....	45
Earnestness.....	164
Ecstasy.....	182
Encouragement.....	211
Eternity.....	290
Everyone Has a Mission.....	43
Excommunication.....	157
Exposure	157
Extravagance	116
Failure.....	208
Faith.....	228
Faith that is Dead.....	230
Fashionable Society..	116
Fearlessly Do Right.....	214
Feeling	184
Fifth Argument for a Resurrection.....	278
First Argument for a Resurrection.....	276
First Principle of the Resurrection.....	280

	PAGE
Fluency and Eloquence.....	187
Forgetting Self.....	247
Fourth Argument for a Resurrection.....	278
Free From the Law.....	225
Friendship.....	191
Germ of Evil.....	247
Gifts.....	227
Giving.....	206
God, in His Works.....	15
God is a Spirit.....	8
God is Everywhere.....	16
God is Holy.....	11
God is Just.....	11
God is Love.....	11
God is Unchangeable.....	10
God's Greatness.....	9
God's Humanity.....	12
God's Revelation.....	89
God's Pleasures.....	124
Good Books.....	120
Grace.....	228
Growth by Doing.....	55
Growth Requires Time.....	55
Guidance.....	39
Happiness and Blessedness.....	122
Hatred.....	148
Heaven.....	273
Hell.....	272
Hiding Our Face from Jesus.....	198
History of Creation.....	13
Holiness.....	257
Home.....	49

	PAGE
Hope.....	266
How Absolution Gives Hope....	178
How to Become Like Christ.....	221
How to Cultivate Memory.....	62
How to Overcome Evil Thoughts.....	262
How to Pray.....	74
How to Retain Friendship.....	192
Hypocrisy.....	148
Idleness.....	136
Idolatry.....	109
Imitation and Copy.....	187
Infant Baptism.....	77
Infidelity.....	139
Influence of the World.....	190
Influence Resides in the Will.....	190
Insincerity.....	148
It is Finished.....	292
Jesus is Coming Again.....	274
Joseph, Moses, David, Isaiah.....	92
Joy.....	264
Judas, Pilate.....	96
Judging.....	145
Judgment Day.....	162
Justification.....	173
Knowledge of God.....	54
Knowledge Shall Vanish.....	52
Language.....	105
Law.....	225
Leaven.....	131
Liberty and Independence.....	108
Like Christ.....	221
Love of God.....	240

	PAGE
Love of Parents.....	240
Love of the World.....	239
Mary, John, James, Peter.....	95
Maxims and Principles..	115
Meditation.....	264
Meekness.....	243
Merit.....	287
Missions.....	70
Mistakes.....	208
Mob Force.....	107
Modesty.....	242
Morality.....	114
Obedience.....	214
Old Age.....	48
One Fault Leads unto Another.....	132
One Law for All.....	170
Origin of Evil.....	129
Our Body.....	59
Our Great Want.....	249
Our Judgment.....	144
Our Lips.....	139
Our Race.....	105
Our Will.....	65
Overcoming.....	213
Parents.....	49
Passion Never Reasons.....	143
Paul.....	97
Peace, How Obtained.....	265
Peace of God.....	266
Penance.....	163
Penitence.....	163
Perfection the Christian's Aim.....	256

	PAGE
Pharaoh, Balaam, Eli, Saul.....	93
Philanthropy.	205
Politeness.....	204
Possibilities.....	39
Praise.....	145
Preaching Christ.....	101
Predestination.....	130
Preparation for Christ's Return.....	275
Pride.....	146
Progress.....	218
Prophecy.....	234
Punishment.....	158
Read Few Books.....	121
Redemption.	174
Reign of the Saints.....	284
Religion.....	66
Religious Excitement.....	185
Religious Feeling.....	184
Remorse.....	159
Repentance.....	162
Repining at Circumstances.....	40
Resolves.....	7
Reverence.....	237
Reverie.....	263
Riches.....	115
Righteousness.....	243
Sacrifices.....	216
Sanctification the Aim of Life.....	254
Sarcasm.....	143
Saving Faith.....	229
Sculpture.....	119
Second Argument for a Resurrection.....	276

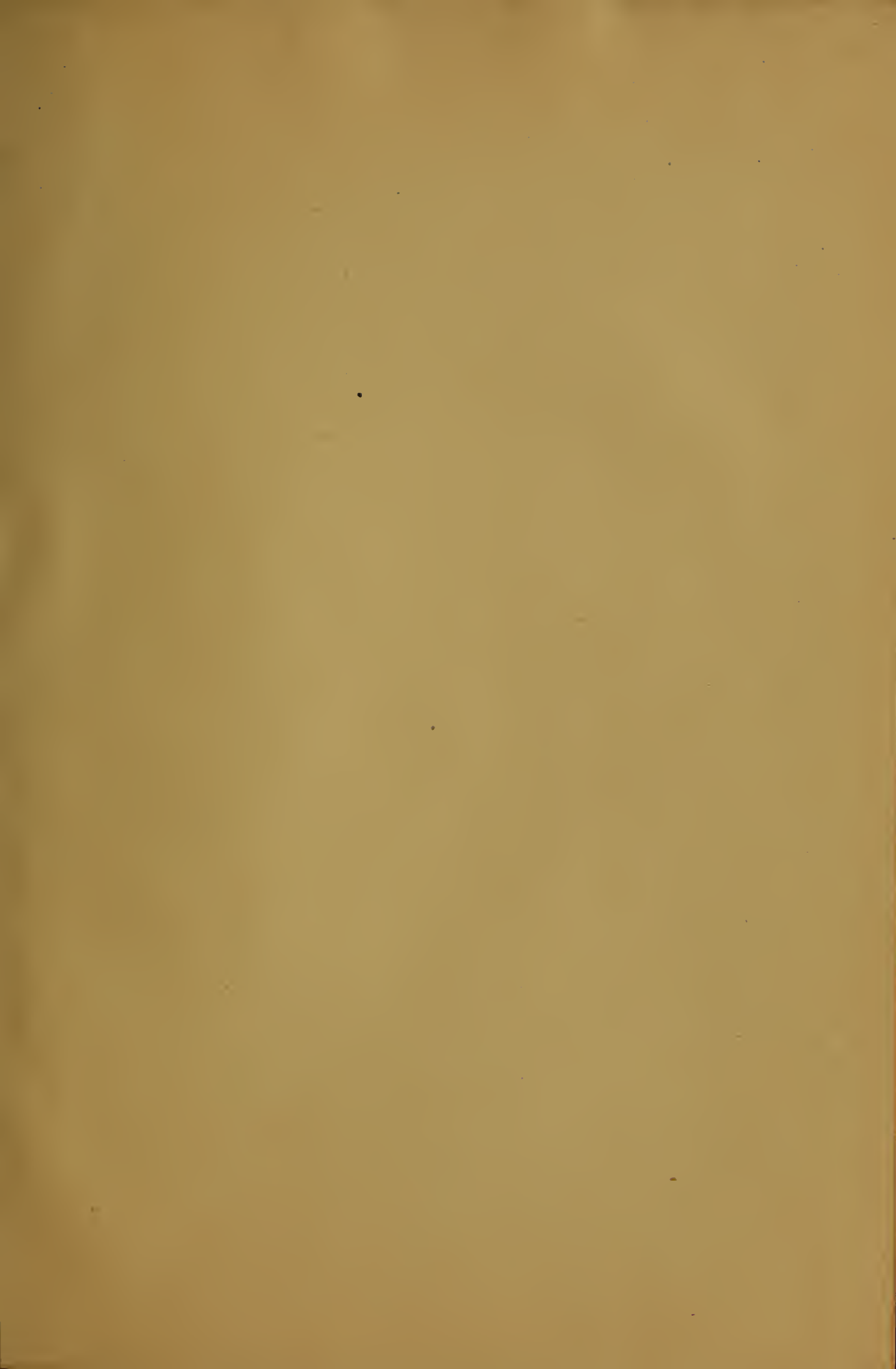
	PAGE
Second Principle of the Resurrection.....	281
Seeking God.....	171
Self-respect Lost.....	160
Sensitiveness.....	238
Serving God at a Loss.....	41
Servitude.....	207
Sin.....	126
Sins of Thought.....	137
Sixth Argument for a Resurrection.....	279
Socialism.....	106
Society.....	105
Solitude.....	193
Sorrow.....	195
Sowing and Reaping.....	125
Spiritual Rewards.....	285
Spiritual Strength.....	214
Spiritual Wisdom.....	236
Stewards.....	206
Struggling Up to God.....	250
Suffering.....	194
Suicide.....	161
Superstition.....	109
Sympathy.....	197
Taste.....	117
Teach Us How to Pray.....	75
Teachers.....	50
Teachers.....	51
Teaching Godliness to Children....	46
Tempted of the Devil.....	128
That Which Remains of the Afflictions of Christ.	217
The Ambition of the Christian.....	189
The Ambition of the World.....	188

	PAGE
The Backward Look.....	103
The Beggar.....	199
The Bible.....	88
The Blood of Christ.....	29
The Capacity of Enjoyment.....	123
The Christian Gentleman.....	203
The Church.....	70
The Confessional.....	87
The Cost of Pleasure.....	123
The Cross of Christ.....	28
The Death of the Christian.....	269
The Death of the Sinner.....	270
The Deepest Curse of Sin.....	152
The Disappointments of Life.....	36
The Emptiness of Life.....	36
The Evil of Party Spirit.....	107
The Evil of Slander.....	140
The Fall of Man.....	130
The Fate of a Sermon.....	100
The First Thing to Do.....	170
The First Time You Sinned.....	131
The Forward Look.....	104
The Function of Sorrow.....	196
The Gentleman of the World.....	203
The Grave.....	270
The Harvest.....	290
The Heart's Yearning after Immortality.....	282
The Heathen.....	68
The Holy of Holies.....	257
The Holy Spirit.....	33
The Hour of Death.....	269
The Lord's Supper.....	78

	PAGE
The Mass	87
The Meaning of Life.....	38
“The Measure of My Days”.....	291
The Memory of the Wicked.....	63
The Middle Class.....	200
The Mind.....	61
The Minister’s Fitness for Work.....	98
The Night.....	18
The Object of Absolution.....	176
The Object of Love.....	239
The Opinion of Others.....	114
The Physician	98
The Poor.....	199
The Puritan Sabbath.....	82
The Remedy for Slander.....	141
The Rest of God.....	252
The Rest of the World.....	252
The Robes of the Invisible.....	17
The Sabbath Abolished to Christians.....	79
The Sabbath a Law Now.....	80
The Sabbath Necessary Now.....	81
The Sabbath of Eternity.....	83
The Sanctifying Power of Sorrow.....	196
The Sea.....	17
The Secret of the Lord.....	260
The Sermon on the Mount.....	23
The Simplicity of the Gospel.....	90
The Sin of Sins.....	139
The Sinner’s Reception.....	181
The Soul Degraded.....	151
The Strength of Sin.....	153
The Trinity.....	34

	PAGE
The Two Sacraments.....	78
The Unitarian View	71
The Unpardonable Sin.....	141
The Valley of the Shadow of Death.....	211
The Worship of the Virgin.....	67
Third Argument for a Resurrection.	277
Third Principle of the Resurrection.....	281
Thorn in the Flesh.....	248
Thoughts of God.....	260
Thoughts of Heaven.....	261
Time.....	102
To Read With Profit.....	121
To Witness to the Truth	235
Tongues.....	232
Tongues May Be Understood	233
“Too Late to Begin”.....	160
Transgression.....	127
Trials.....	248
Trust.....	230
Truthfulness and Veracity	236
Try Again.....	212
Unbelief.	138
Unconscious Influence.....	191
Unrest.....	250
Unutterable Things.....	259
Unworldliness.	244
Vain Preaching.....	101
Vanity.....	146
Virtue.	231
Visions	258
What is Absolution?.....	174
What is Forgiveness?.....	168

	PAGE
What is Perfection ?.....	255
What is Prayer ?.....	73
What is Sanctification?.....	254
What is Truth?.....	234
“ What Shall I Do to be Saved? ”.....	169
Why Forgive Others?.....	168
Wickedness	149
Wise Men from the East.....	69
Work	219
Work Out Your Own Salvation.....	219
Worldliness.....	113
Worship.....	66
Worthless Knowledge.....	53
Would You Be Rich?.....	200
Your Life Work.....	38
Your Pledge to God.....	212
Youth.....	47
Zeal.....	186



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